

matrix

The News Magazine of the
British Science Fiction Association

Issue 126

July / August 1997

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▲ Molly Brown, whose story "Community Service" was runner-up for this year's BSFA Award.



▲ Norman Spinrad, respondent in a green velvet suit.

Award nominee N. Lee Wood. ▶



▲ Award judge Lord Mark Birdwood.



THE

Arthur C Clarke

AWARD



▲ Geoff Ryman with the SF Foundation's Andy Sawyer.



▲ Brian Stableford in animated discussion with Interzone editor David Pringle.

BSFA Survey Results . . Why Do You Buy Books? . . Movie News . . Heavy Metal . . Books . . Letters

matrix

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BSFA

British Science Fiction Association

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Friday 15 August 1997

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Email
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to me weekly

Media

Artwork (page 11)

Logo

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Contributions to Matrix are welcome: letters, news, clippings, artwork, articles, reviews. Please contact me first for substantial items. You can now email me via bsfa@enterprise.net, but this is a proxy service so I'm afraid I can't guarantee an immediate reply.

news

Ghosh Wins 1997 Clarke Award

An impressive array of sf talent assembled in the Science Museum on the evening of 28 May for the presentation of this year's Arthur C. Clarke Award. The prize went to **Amitav Ghosh** for his novel *The Calcutta Chromosome*. Ghosh, an expatriate Indian living in New York, was unable to attend but the prize of an engraved bookend and a cheque for £1,000 was accepted by a representative of his publishers, Picador. It was presented by last year's winner, Paul J. McAuley.

There was a sombre note in this year's ceremony, due to the death earlier this year of the instigator of the Clarke Award and a regular judge for it, Dr Maurice Goldsmith of the International Science Policy Foundation. In his speech, the award's current Administrator Paul Kincaid paid tribute to Goldsmith's energy and commitment, saying that "without him none of us would be here tonight."

This year's judges – see picture – were Dr Andrew M. Butler and Steve Jeffery (representing the BSFA), Lord Mark Birdwood (representing the ISPF), and Gwyneth Jones and Ian Watson (representing the Science Fiction Foundation). Other sf notables present included Fred Clarke and Angie Edwards representing Arthur C. Clarke, Pat Cadigan, Molly Brown, David Garnett of *New Worlds*, Dave Langford, Paul J. McAuley, David Pringle of *Interzone*, Geoff Ryman, Andy Sawyer of the SF Foundation, Michael Marshall Smith, Brian Stableford, and Norman Spinrad. Drinks, munchies and general organisation were provided by BSFA personnel and members of Croydon fandom, in particular Mark Plummer, Claire Brailey, Tony Cullen, Elizabeth and Paul Billinger, and Maureen Kincaid Speller.



The Usual Suspects This year's judges, just after the ceremony. From left: Gwyneth Jones, Ian Watson, Lord Mark Birdwood, Andrew M. Butler and Tanya Brown, acting as proxy for Steve Jeffery who was working in Texas.

Arthur C. Clarke Award

Amitav Ghosh

The Calcutta Chromosome
(Picador, £15.99)

SHORTLIST

Stephen Baxter *Voyager*
(Voyager £16.99)

Jack McDevitt *Engines of God*
(Voyager £5.99)

Kim Stanley Robinson *Blue Mars*
(Voyager £9.99)

Sheri S. Tepper *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*
(Voyager £9.99)

N. Lee Wood *Looking for the Mahdi*
(Vista £5.99)

There was some media interest in the event – Award Administrator Paul Kincaid was interviewed by the Sci-Fi Channel for its sf news programme, as were nominees N. Lee Wood and Stephen Baxter. Also spotted in the transmission were the BSFA's Mark Plummer, Andy Butler, Tanya Brown, Paul Hood, and a certain *Matrix* editor.

- The last time a non-genre book won (Marge Piercy's *Body of Glass* in 1993) there was some criticism of the result, notably from John Clute. This year there was little complaint about the winner, but there does appear to be some dissatisfaction with the shortlist, particularly from within the publishing industry.

- The judges for the Clarke Award serve for two years. Retiring this year are the BSFA's Steve Jeffery, who will be replaced by Tanya Brown; and the Foundation's Ian Watson, who will be replaced by John Clute (if he's recovered from his appearance on the *Clive Anderson* show). It is not known at press time what will be happening about the vacant ISPF position.

- For a look at the history of the Clarke Award, now in its eleventh year, see *Matrix* 121.

- The *Calcutta Chromosome* was reviewed by Brian Stableford in *Vector* 192.

Bujold Joins S&S

Lois McMaster Bujold is among the first signings to Simon & Schuster's new sf line, due to be launched in April 1998. The editor is **John Jarrold**, who recently moved to S&S after a successful period at the helm of Legend. The name of the imprint has been changed from Spectrum to **Earthlight** after worries from Bantam Spectra in New York over possible confusion.

"I don't think there's any doubt that Lois is one of the most popular sf writers in the world, and I want to publish her properly in the UK," said Jarrold. Her Hugo-nominated sf novel *Memory* will be on the launch list, to be followed in October by a novel provisionally entitled *Ekaterin*. Also on the first list will be *Escardi Gap* by **Peter Crowther** & **James Lovegrove**, a dark fantasy described as having antecedents of Clive Barker, Ray Bradbury and Stephen King. Jarrold previously worked with Crowther on the dark fantasy / horror anthology *Narrow Houses* at Macdonald Futura in 1991. All the books will be published as paperback originals. □

FREE!

A Very British Genre

A Short History of British Fantasy and Science Fiction
by Paul Kincaid

This acclaimed 68-page book is a critical survey of the development of British science fiction, from the 12th century to 1995. It includes a chronology, a checklist of contemporary authors, and is exhaustively indexed. Normally costing £5, it is **FREE** to all BSFA members.

If you haven't claimed yours, send your membership number and a self-addressed A5 envelope with two first or second class stamps to

Maureen Kincaid Speller

60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ.

Extra copies are also available for £5 each, including post and packing (cheques payable to BSFA Ltd).

snippings

WATERSTONES WATERSTONES EVERYWHERE The Waterstone's bookshop chain is to open over 50 new shops around the country, primarily in places currently ill-served by bookstores. This will give it a near-dominant position in the book market.

KEN BULMER is still in hospital following his stroke shortly before Easter, but is reported to be improving. Vince Clarke says, "I'm told he's now well enough to sit up and read. It looks as though he will be confined to a wheelchair after he leaves."

TROMEO AND JULIET hot on the heels of the highly successful (and highly contemporary) recent film of *Romeo and Juliet* comes Troma Studios' version, set in the near future. They've messed around with the ending though - in this version Juliet survives. As a cow, after eating BSE-infected beef. Lloyd Kaufman is the producer and writer.

RETICULATED INTERESTS Peterborough SF Club is spinning a web site - <http://www.btinternet.com/~c.ayres/psf.htm> - with sections on local history and Dracula.

GODZILLA'S CREATOR DIES Tomoyuki Tanaka, born in 1910 and creator of the long-running 'Godzilla' series of Japanese monster movies, died in Tokyo on 2 April. Godzilla is currently being remade in Hollywood (see below).

IRWIN ALLEN COLLABORATOR DIES The death has been announced of Paul Zastupnevich, who worked on many Irwin Allen productions. D. & F. Symes write: "Paul Zastupnevich was Irwin Allen's right-hand man on all his films (*Towering Inferno*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, *The Lost World*) and in TV programmes (*Lost In Space*, *The Time Tunnel*, *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Land of the Giants*). Although credited only with being costume designer, or sometimes assistant to the producer because Allen would only let him have one on-screen credit, he was actually costume designer, actor, co-producer, crisis-solver and general dogsboddy on everything Allen made. Paul died in his home in California after a short illness, and will be sadly missed by all his old friends in show-business."

"Paul came over to Sheffield for the 'Voyage' convention in July 1995, and was expected to be at this year's too. He gave two Guest of Honour talks to Voyage 35 which were extremely entertaining, not only to fans of Allen's TV series but to film buffs as well, as he had worked with just about every famous bit star from 1959 to 1980. He had wonderful tales to tell about everything, and on top of that he was an exceptionally nice man."

A Midsummer Odyssey

MIDSUMMER SEES the launch of the trial issue of *Odyssey*, an 80-page sf and fantasy magazine from Partizan Press edited by Liz Holliday, a former editor of the BSFA's *Focus*. The full launch will be at October's World Fantasy Convention in London. Coming with a colour cover and colour and b/w interior illustrations, it will cost £3 in the shops. Partizan is also the publisher of the role-playing magazine *Valkyrie*, for which Liz is fiction editor; the trial issue of *Odyssey* will contain a selection of fiction from *Valkyrie*, including contributions from Brian Stableford, Mary Gentle & Dean Wayland, and George Alec Effinger.

Regular columnists will include Dave Langford on books, Colin Greenland with advice for new writers, Roz Kaveney and Andy Lane on sf and

popular culture, and Marcus Rowland (creator of *Forgotten Futures*) on games. There will be interviews by Jane Killick (author of the recent *Babylon 5* series guides), Kurt Roth and Steve Holland, and reviews from Chris Amies, Alex Stewart, Ben Jeapes and others.

Single issues will be available from Calver Books (816-818 London Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, SS9 3NH) at £3.75 inc. p&p. A 5-issue sub will cost £15 (UK), and a 12-issue sub is £35.

Liz Holliday, a Clarion SF Writers' Workshop graduate, has written ten novelisations and much sf journalism. Her sf and fantasy stories have appeared in various anthologies and magazines, and in 1994 she was nominated for the Eastercon Award and the Crime Writers' Association Short Story Dagger. □

• Contributors' guidelines for *Odyssey* can be found in 'Out of Focus' on page 21.

Arthur C. Clarke Foundation Launches Website

ON 3rd JUNE the Arthur C. Clarke Foundation web site went live. Sponsored by US telecoms company Cable & Wireless to the tune of £350,000, the site claims to offer "the definitive history of modern communications, computing and media" on the Internet, and is based on extensive research conducted over the last year. It covers 1793 to the present day, with links into the future.

The site is the size of a large reference book, containing over 40,000 words and 200 images, and is linked to more than 100 other related web sites. It's organised along a linear timescale, and shows key dates of developments in the history of communications over the last 200 years - as well as showing some of Clarke's predictions for the future. Typical entries include the first telegraph

and the cracking of the German Enigma codes. The author, John May, is a British writer and commentator on the digital revolution. He says, "The site is an original book on the web - an organic interactive encyclopedia. This is just the first stage in the development of what I believe will become one of the most significant science and technology sites on the web."

The Communications section is the first of four key sections on the Clarke Foundation site to go online. The others - Futures, Space, and Oceans - await commercial sponsorship. But the site does currently contain a chronology of Clarke's life, quotes and predictions, objects from the 'Clarivates' and details of the Foundation. □

• Clarke Foundation: <http://www.acclarke.co.uk>

screen

HOTS

to take part in the game over and over. The film was partly financed by London-based Capital Films.

BIZARRE LOVE TRIANGLE After showing that British films needn't always be about repressed homosexuals in Edwardian or WWII settings, Danny Boyle and Andrew MacDonald (*Shallow Grave*, *Trainspotting*) and the yet-unreleased *A Life Less Ordinary*) are next planning to go all kinky with a film entitled *Alive Love Triangle*. Apparently this portmanteau three-stories-around-one-theme piece won't be written by their three-time collaborator, Oscar nominee John Hodge, as he wants to get back to his medical career. The NHS's gain is our loss. Boyle will only be directing the middle segment, with the first being handled by Bill Gregory's *Girl Forsyth*. Who will be helming the third segment is a closely guarded secret... but the Coen Bros are on record as saying they intend to shoot a film in the UK this year. Now there's a thought.

movie news from john ashbrook

chrysalids film? ... new gibson movie ... jesuits in space ... orbital imax ...

WILDE TRIFFIDS Coming soon is a biopic of Oscar Wilde, called *Wilde* and starring Stephen Fry as the big man. Why should this be of interest to you? Here's three reasons to kick off with: 1) Wilde wrote a substantial amount of fantasy (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Happy Prince*); 2) Fry writes *sf* (*The Lie, Making History*); and 3) the film's producers, Marc and Peter Samuelson, have also optioned John Wyndham's entire oeuvre. If *Wilde* is a hit, they'll have enough finance to get stuck straight into their big screen version of *The Chrysalids*. I wish I'd thought of that. You will, John, you will.

MONKEY BUSINESS Unfortunately bad taste has won out over wishful thinking, and Roland Emmerich (*Independence Day*) has, against my explicit advice, shouted "Action!" on the huge-budget American debut of *Godzilla*. The die is cast, and not a major disaster can save us from it now. Meanwhile, Ron Underwood (*Tremors*, *City Slickers*) is similarly lying in the face of reason by directing a remake of *Mighty Joe Young*. Both films are shooting extensively in Hawaii. So now you know where not to go on holiday this summer.

But it's not all bad news. There's always *Species 2* to look forward to. Yes, that timeless masterpiece has spawned a sequel. Natasha Heistrige returns to her multi-faceted rôle as the alien who takes her clothes off and kills people. The other survivors of the first film will also return, forsaking money in the interests of artistic integrity. This eagerly awaited epic will be directed by Peter Medak (*The Krays*, *Romeo Is Bleeding*).

STARSPOTTING In the 'I'll Believe It When I See It' category we have the new *Star Wars* film. The cameras will probably be rolling over in Levesden by the time you read

this, with, we are led to believe, Ewan McGregor (*Trainspotting*, *Brassed Off*) as a young Obi Wan, Liam Neeson (*Schindler's List*) as a young Anakin, Samuel Jackson (*Pulp Fiction*, *Die Hard 3*) as the guy who says "motherfucker" a lot, and Natalie Portman (*Leon*, *Mars Attacks*) as Jai. The man with the loudspeaker is that George Lucas fellow.

FLYING INTO SPACE Mary Doria Russell's Tiptree-winning novel *The Sparrow*, about a Jesuit priest sent into space to make contact with aliens (and presumably convert them to Catholicism) is due to go into production with Antonio Banderas in the lead rôle. It will be directed by Australian Geoffrey Wright, whose last production was the thoroughly distasteful skinhead flick *Romper Stomper*.

I've Got A New Rose ... And while we're on the subject of Catholicism, long-time purveyor of guilt-on-a-stick Abel Ferrara, who released two films this spring (the gangster melodrama *The Funeral* and the monochrome vampire gothic *The Addiction*, both starring Christopher Walken and Annabella Sciorra, and both highly recommended), is next scheduled to bring to life William Gibson's "New Rose Motel", again with Walken. Now we'll see how cyberpunk should really look.

PRIVATE MEDICINE If you were fortunate enough to enjoy the highbrow delights of US shock-jock Howard Stern's *Private Parts*, you'll be delighted to learn that director Betty Thomas (once seen on a weekly basis wearing a shield and bad perm in *Hill Street Blues*) is well into production on a new big-budget Hollywood version of *Dr Doogie*. After working with Stern, she must be fairly adept at talking to animals.

Scribble, Scribble, Scribble

- **Jeff Noon's** *Nymphomaniac* is with Doubleday for October publication. It's set in a surreal Manchester totally dominated by the lottery game Domino Bones and the company behind it, which has the 'nymphomaniac', the secret knowledge behind the game's mechanics, which allows information to make love to itself, producing 'baby data'. A group of maths students study the odds and begin a search for the hidden mysteries behind the mania.
- **Robert Holdstock's** *Gate of Ivory* is a Mythago Wood novel due early next year from Voyager. It tells the story of Christian Huxley, who has made various fleeting appearances through the sequence, and explains the mystery behind his mother's suicide, alluded to in the first novel. *Mythago Wood* (which will be simultaneously reissued).
- After his novel *Spare* was bought up by Spielberg's DreamWorks SKG company for over \$10 million, **Michael Marshall Smith** - pictured right at the recent Clarke Award ceremony in the Science Museum - is dividing his time between his next novel *One of Us* and various film projects, including adaptations of Clive Barker's *Weaveworld*, Jay Russell's violent thriller *Celestial Dogs* and, interestingly, *The Stalking*, the six-volume horror sequence by 'Robert Faulcon', a.k.a. **Robert Holdstock**.
- **Paul Barnett** has delivered *Kaantalech* to Legend for November publication; it's the second in the 'Strider' space-opera series.
- In December Orion will be publishing twenty-five 80-page books under the rubric 'Predictions', at £2 each, in which 'some of the world's most distinguished academics and writers attempt to forecast the future, over the next 50 years, across a range of social, economic, political, geographical and technological subject areas'. Titles include *Cosmology* (John Gribbin), *Education* (George Steiner), *Frontiers of the Mind* (Richard Gregory), *Manipulative Reproduction* (Robert Winston), *Future Media* (Patrick Barwise & Kathy Hammond), *Population* (John Clarke), *Superhighways* (Andrew Graham), *Climate* (Andrew Goudie), and *Crime and Punishment* (Stephen Tumin).
- **Jack McDevitt's** *Engines of God* was nominated for this year's Clarke Award, and his next novel is *Eternity Road*, far-future sci due from Voyager in February 1998. Again it's about mysterious relics, this time strange metal canisters with the mysterious runes 'PEPSI' inscribed on them, and a book which may reveal the workings of 20th century minds - *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* by Mark Twain.
- **Stan Nicholls** has been commissioned by Orion to write a fantasy trilogy with the series title 'Orcs: First Blood'. The first volume, working title *A Bodyguard of Lightning*, is due to appear in Spring 1998. Meanwhile, publication of his *Dark Skies* novelisation, *The Awakening*, has been put back to October by Bantam Books.
- **Shari S. Tepper's** follow-up to the Clarke Award-nominated *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* is *The Family Tree*, due in December from Voyager. A plague of fast-growing trees seems to be taking over America, while in a far distant future where technology has all but vanished a strange quest is embarked on by a pair of princes.
- **Robert Rankin's** tasteful *The Brentford Chainsaw Massacre* clones Jesus from blood on the Turin Shroud. Six times, so each major religion can have one. It's due from Doubleday in December, just in time for his birthday.
- **Poppy Z. Brite's** next book is a biography of Hole singer, actress and consort of the late Kurt Cobain, Courtney Love. It's due in December from Orion. Love's previous dealings with interviewers and biographers have been marked by considerable venom, so it'll be interesting to see how Brite manages.



Photo: Chris Turner

... prehistoric ducks ... titanic panic ... smithy lynched ... murdoch squeezed

DISNEY WORLD Not that they're expecting it to be a hit or anything, but Disney are already well into production on a straight-to-video sequel to the not-yet-released-anywhere-on-Earth animated feature *Hercules*. Of course, they're also working on a sequel to *Toy Story*, but they'll do it without the original film's director John Lasseter, as he's working on *A Bug's Life*, also for Disney. Wonder how the Southern Baptists will react to Disney promoting positive images of insects?

BRADFORD, WE HAVE A PROBLEM The Imax Corporation of Canada has signed a deal to make one of their huge-format 3D films about the construction of the International Space Station, due - Mr problems permitting - to begin construction late this year. The footage will be shot out in space by astronauts using cameras which are being specially developed for the job by Imax and Lockheed Martin. Of course, with it being in 3D, you'll be able to see the orbiting fragments of Mr wreckage seemingly flying out of the screen at you.

TITANIC SINKS James Cameron's unwieldy historical romance disaster movie *Titanic*, having spectacularly failed to hit its 4 July Christmas date (it still isn't finished), has been pushed back to Christmas week (in America, God alone knows when we'll see it over here). Which means that Murdoch's Fox corporation is going to have to stump up another six months' interest on a \$200 million loan. Unless they practice Channel Economics, of course, and simply tell their creditors to go swivel.

T-WRECKS Meanwhile, Murdoch's Fox network (affiliated to our very own BSkyB) has just coughed up \$80 million for the tv rights to *The Lost World*. This is more than the film cost to make, and is in addition to the \$190 million it made in its first month of release in the US.

In order to make a point about computerised movies, some pesky hacker managed to slice chunks out of Universal Picture's net security and waltzed into the official *Lost World* web site to replace the trademark T-Rex logo with a duck. The year's biggest money-spinner briefly became *The Lost Pond: Jurassic Duck*.

WHO HE? And finally, on the subject of name changes, if you've ever seen the special three-hour version of the movie *Dune* (which isn't available in Britain yet, so I'm not expecting too many of you to put your hands up), the more observant among you will have noticed that director David Lynch has had his name mysteriously changed 'Alan Smithie'. Is this just a practical joke on Lynch's part? No. Smithie is the director of some of the most truly embarrassingly bad movies ever... but here's the twist: he don't exist. 'Alan Smithie' is the name the Directors' Guild of America insists be used when a director is so embarrassed by a film - usually because the producers have taken it off him and re-cut it - that he wants to have his name removed. Since it can't really say 'Directed by... well, no one, actually', it instead says 'Directed by Alan Smithie'.

I mention this because a Hollywood parody has been in the works for a year or so, called '*An Alan Smithie Film*' and directed by Arthur Hiller. Well, Hiller is so upset at the way it has turned out that - yep, you guessed it - he's asked for his name to be removed. So '*An Alan Smithie Film*' has suddenly turned into an autobiopic.

Meanwhile, the Directors' Guild isn't best pleased that its little secret is so completely out of the closet, so is scratching its communal head to come up with a new name to represent everything that is abominable about motion pictures. The words 'winner' and 'michael' spring to mind...

— John Ashbrook

Star Line-Up For New Worlds

The second issue of the relaunched *New Worlds* magazine, under its editor David Garnett, will be out in August from US publisher White Wolf. The contents are:

Pat Cadigan 'The Emperor's New Reality' • **Eric Brown** 'Farnham' • **Kim Newman** 'Great Western' • **Peter F. Hamilton** & **Graham Joyce** 'The White Stuff' • **Noel K. Hadden** 'A Night on the Town' • **Brian W. Aldiss** 'Death, Sinit, Love, Transfiguration' • **Andrew Stephenson** 'The Pact' • **Howard Waldrop** 'Heart of Whiteness' • **Ian Watson** 'A Day Without Dad' • **Garry Kilworth** 'Attack of the Charlie Chaplins' • **Christine Manby** 'For Life' • **Graham Charnock** 'A Night on Bare Mountain' • **Michael Moorcock** 'London Bone' • **William Gibson** 'Thirteen Views of a Cardboard City'.

William Gibson has now finally made it as a *New Worlds* author. His first professional sale ('The Gernsback Continuum', written in 1979) was to the magazine, but there was one problem - it was in non-publication mode at the time. The story eventually appeared in *Universe* 11 in 1981.

Andrew Stephenson wrote two well-received novels in the 1970s - *Nightwatch* and *The Wall of Years* - but then fell silent. The 'Pact' marks a welcome return.

Shamefully, *New Worlds* - a British sci-fi institution - still doesn't have a UK publisher. Import copies should be available in specialist stores and the larger Waterstones, but it surely deserves a larger audience.

George Turner

Australian sci-fi writer **George Turner** died on 8 June after suffering a stroke on 5 June. He was 80, and was due to be Guest of Honour at the 1999 Worldcon to be held in Melbourne; the committee will not be replacing him. He started publishing at when he was in his 60s, with *Beloved Son*, and his novel *The Sea and Summer* won the second Arthur C. Clarke Award in 1988.

• Full obituary next issue

Awards Miscellany

The *James Tiptree Award* (given for sci-fi concerned with gender issues) was won by **Mary Doria Russell** for her novel *The Sparrow*. *Interzone* co-founder, editor and publisher **David Pringle** has won the Milford Award for lifetime achievement in publishing and editing. This year's *Pilgrim Award* for sci-fi criticism went to **Marleen Barr**. The *Pilgrim* is awarded by the Science Fiction Research Association; last year's winner was John Clute. • The *Bram Stoker Awards* for horror went to: **NOVEL** *Stephen King* *The Green Mile*; **FIRST NOVEL** *Owl Goingback* (Donald Fife); **CROST** *NOVELLETTE* *Thomas Ligotti* 'The Red Tower'; **SHORT STORY** *T. D. Caze* 'Metallica'; **COLLECTION** *Thomas Ligotti* *The Nightmarer Factory*; **NOFICTION** *T. J. L. P. Lovcraft* *A Life*; **LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT** *Ira Levin* and **Forrest J. Ackerman**. • The *Mythopoeic Fantasy Award* novel shortlist is: **John Barnes** *One for the Morning Glory*; **Patricia McKillip** *Winter Rose*; **Nancy Springer** *Fair Pair*; **Tem Windler** *The Wood Wife*; **Gena Wolfe** *The Book of the Long Sun*.

Many thanks to

John Ashbrook, John Bark, Steve Baxter, Elizabeth & Paul Billinger, Andrew M. Butler, Arthur C. Clarke, Andy Cox, Cardiff Cox, David Garnett, Edward James, John Jarrold, Dave Langford, Farah Mendelsohn, the staff of *Murder One*, Stan Nicholls, John Ollis, Steve Palmer, Mark Plummer, Julie Rigby, Roger Robinson, Marcus L. Rowland, Ruby, Andy Sawyer, Steve Sneyd, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Brian Stablesford, D & F Symes, Julie Tiller, Ian Watson, and Jessica Yates.

World Fantasy Con?

THERE'S BEEN some unease expressed about the cost of this year's World Fantasy Convention, being held this autumn at the Britannia International Hotel in London's Docklands, which was also used for the 1995 Eastercon. Membership costs £100; the similarly-sized Liverpool Eastercon earlier this year cost £30. Room rates for the 1995 Docklands Eastercon were £37 per night; the WFC has managed to charge £65. In dollar terms, the WFC costs \$165 while this year's Worldcon in Texas – a much larger and more ambitious event – costs \$135.

The explanation usually offered for this is that the WFC is primarily an event for professionals in the field. Unfortunately, many writers (and fans)

don't have expense accounts or earn enough to justify the cost, which has resulted in some (reportedly even including some judges for the World Fantasy Awards, which are presented at the convention) being effectively barred from attending.

As a partial remedy, an extra-mural get-together has been suggested so that interested paupers can meet and mingle with those of the Rich, Famous or Expense-Accounted as can be lured along. Currently this is scheduled for Wednesday 29 October (the day before the convention proper starts) at the Jubilee pub in Waterloo, site of the monthly BSFA and London Circle meetings. Keep an eye on the Events listings for updates. □

- Full details of the WFC can be found in 'Events' on page 22.
- Gwyneth Jones wrote about last year's WFC in Matrix 123.

• A similar document is being prepared for the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, for which corrections are welcome; send them to Dave at 94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU or email alan@eifc.co.uk. Also in preparation are a list of theme entries – omitted from the book for space reasons – and an alphabetical listing of opera composers (the *OPERA* entry is somewhat baroque-organised, with composers appearing in order of their first relevant composition). Both should be available later in the year.

• Explanations have emerged for some of the omissions from the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*. Or rather, an explanation: space. There were extreme pressures on the book's length shortly before publication, which resulted in the removal of a number of authors, one criterion being a predominantly young-adult contribution to fantasy. Victims included Gwyneth Jones and Alasdair Gray. □

Encyclopedia Fantasia

IF YOU OWN a copy of the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, there's an essential (and official) addendum to it freely available on the net. It contains factual and typographical corrections, new information, and updates on such things as death dates. It's maintained by Dave Langford and can be found at the UK Science Fiction Archive located at Glasgow University (along with much else of similar interest): <http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF/Archives/Misc/fsc.html>

As it's a fairly substantial document – about 40 pages of printout – it's split up into alphabetical sections. If you haven't got access to the net, go along to your nearest cybercafé where you should be able to get it printed out for a nominal fee.

BA In Leeds

The British Association's annual festival of science will be held on 7-12 September at Leeds University. The festival is an opportunity for the public to see and hear prominent scientists talking about their work, scientific issues and policy, and the latest research. There's fun, too, with a cyber café, egg races, computer art, a virtual science park, exhibits on bubbles, boomerangs and beer and 'exploding custard', and much more. Notable speakers and events this year – in a huge programme – include evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (author of *The Selfish Gene* and *The Blind Watchmaker*); a public debate on 'Will Machines Rule the Earth?' with robotic Kevin Warwick and mathematician Roger Penrose; Frank Close on particle physics; Nobel laureate Harry Kroto on buckyballs in space; Will Hutton (author of the splendid *The State We're In*) on entrepreneurial science; tar-out physics lectures on 'Science and the construction of reality' and 'How far can physics stretch?'; chief government scientist Sir Robert May; a lecture on 'Fairgrounds of the Future'; how Fermat's Last Theorem was solved; Adrian McKmyer on 'What to ask an alien'; Colin Pillinger on 'Life on Mars'.

You can tell the scientists who have an eye for publicity. Alex Waddell's lecture is called 'Stress Relief by Vibration' (he's an engineer, of course), and here's Robin Baker on 'Sperm Wars, Infidelity, Testis Size and Male Body Symmetry'.

The standard charge for the week end is £120 (£30 per day), but there are substantial discounts. BA members pay £70 (£14/day), and students and local residents – defined as having an LS, WF or BP postcode – pay only £30 for the week, or £10 per day. Contact: BA Major Events Dept., 23 Savile Row, London, W1X 2NB.

Tel 0171 973 3076/3500. Fax 0171 973 3051.
Email: ba.major.mgr@mrcpl.org.uk
Web: www.britisassoc.org.uk

More Snippings

MAGIMX US role-playing game producer and publisher TSR recently got into financial trouble, owing substantial back royalties to authors such as Margaret Weiss and Tracy Hickman. The company was subsequently taken over by Wizards of the Coast, who own the immensely lucrative *Magic: The Gathering* card game. After consultation with his fans on the net, Terry Pratchett decided against allowing a *MTG*-style card game based on the *Discworld* books.

BSFA INDEXED BSFA member Michael J. Cross has set up a Web site which carries indexes to 205 issues of *Vector* and *Focus*. Though not official, the information is reliable and well-represented. Web: <http://www.mjckeh.demon.co.uk/topbsfa.htm>



IAIN BANKS was profiled in *The Guardian* of 20 May, in a fine piece of principled journalism perpetrated by Phil Daoust. Iain Banks writes books about sex and drugs. Iain M Banks is a sci-fi nerd. Are they by any chance related? ran the

headline, introducing an interview conducted at this year's Eastercon. Daoust was not impressed by the surroundings: "What the hell are you doing in a place like this? It's a question you have to wrestle back down your throat when you see the queue of Iain Banks is keeping at Liverpool's Adelphi Hotel... crowds of bulging T-shirts, bizarre facial hair and multicoloured waistcoats. The word 'Prithvi' echoes in the air... And, confirming that weirdos and real ale still go together, pints of Theakston's Old Peculier perch on every surface." Oh God, not the 'weirdos' one again....

CHARLES CHILTON followed up his extensive interview in *Foundation* 68 with a substantial feature appearance in *The Sunday Telegraph* of 15 June, timed for his 80th birthday. Chilton wrote and produced the 1950s of radio serial *Johnny Into Space*, and writer Byron Rogers is still captivated, perhaps excessively so, when he becomes a journalist the three names on his must-interview list were W. H. Auden, Burt Lancaster and Chilton. Rogers says that "The 27 hours of JIS, for each episode of which Chilton had a budget of just £180, are better than *Star Wars* and far better than *Star Trek*. It stands alongside Kubrick and Clarke's 2001 as a masterpiece of sf drama." When they first met, 20 years ago, Rogers remembers seeing Chilton's nameplate at the Beeb, 'Producer, IUT Entertainment', and says, "Was that the only job description the BBC's bureaucracy could find for the one genius it ever had on its staff?" Genius or not, Chilton is puzzled by the interest shown in JIS, and recalls that "It was glad when it was over so he could go on to produce *Take It From Here*". He

really prefers to talk about his radio piece *The Long, Long Trail*, which evolved into the musical *Oh, What a Lovely War*. He's still annoyed by Joan Littlewood's dropping of his name from the credits, which had to be sorted out legally, and mentions that he was "furious" about Alan Clark's diaries (he's not alone), which claim that Littlewood was solely responsible for the piece. Rogers ends his over-the-top but very interesting article with "Chilton denies that he is a legend. But he will be."

THE TORY LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN generated a number of references, mainly because of candidate John Redwood's 'The Vulcan' nickname. A splendid Peter Brooke cartoon in *The Times* of 17 June showed heroic lantern-jawed Dan Blair – "Pilot for the Foreseeable Future" – with sidekick Digby played by John Prescott, pitted against William Hague as The Mekon – all eerily accurate depictions. Brooke got those weird eyebrows right, too.

TERRY PRATCHETT gritted his teeth and attempted to answer a number of perceptive questions from Victoria Lane in the *Sunday Telegraph* of 11 May. "What is your most unappealing habit?", she simpered. "Aggressive reasonableness, or so my wife would probably say." "Would", she probed, "you want to live [on the *Discworld*]?" "No – it's a fantasy city." "Oh, you're no fun," was her crushing riposte. Next she turned to Terry's literary origins: "You became a writer after standing next to Arthur C. Clarke in the pents – did you speak to him?" "Well, not at the time, no." "Ms Lane dug for scandal – "What's your greatest indulgence?" "I buy any book I want – and played straight-woman – "What description of yourself do you like least?" "Dead", and finished off triumphantly with "How will you behave when you're a grand old man of letters?" "Disgraciously," said Tel longingly, with doubtless a pointed glance at his interviewer.

These, apparently, were 'The questions you'd really like to put to Terry Pratchett'. Whither journalism? Gone to *The Times* of 24 May perhaps, where Terry was interviewed by

Dominic Lytens in the '10-15' supplement. First revealing an early passion for *Paradise Lost*, he talked mostly about the *tv* series: "Were you worried your characters wouldn't work when animated?" "No, I had lots of faith in Cosgrove Hall... I'd worked with them before [..] on *Truckers*. They couldn't include everything in the books but they abbreviated them expertly." Terry was also pleased with the voice actors, particularly Jane Horrocks as Magrat Garlick. Nanny Ogg, the nudge-nudge 'ow's-ye-father grandmotherly one, goes down well in am-dram circles: "People all over the country put on *Discworld* plays, and I see a lot of them. Whether in Northumberland, Bristol or London, Nanny Ogg is played with a local accent and she always works." Mindful of the piece's readership, he said that Wyrd Sisters is "like *Macbeth* if the characters had added sensibility," and dolefully informed them that, in his opinion, the *Spice Girls* won't last.

PSYCHOLOGIST Sandy Wolfson flogged a feebly twitching horse by claiming, in an article for the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* (13 June), that obsessive Trekkies show symptoms similar to users of heroin and cocaine (a story that has surfaced a number of times this year). "About 5-10% of fans met the psychological criteria of addiction, showing withdrawal symptoms such as agitation and frustration if they miss an episode and developing higher tolerance levels, so they need increasing doses." But the good news, allegedly, is that *Star Trek* can also enrich your life. "Most Trekkies have made friends and even met spouses through their love of the series," she says, and goes on to claim, with exquisitely double-edged phrasing, that "they are intellectually challenged by the moral dilemmas in the show." How true. Wolfson, with a fine feel for markets, is now working on a book based on her research.

—Chris Terran

• With grateful thanks to Elizabeth Billinger, John Ollis, and Jessica Yates. Send sf-related clippings and cuttings to Chris Terran at the editorial address.

recent & forthcoming books

Macmillan

Including Pan, Bantam

BANTAM



Roger Fulton *The Encyclopedia of TV Science Fiction* (Bantam: 21 Mar. £18.99 pb, 697pp ill.) — Third edition. The mark — and perhaps the pride — of transporter mentality is not obsessive attention to minutiae in a particular field; it's the refusal to acknowledge relevance to the wider world. It's disconnected. This book can fairly be described as an 'anorak' guide for such a reason: unlike, say, the *SF and Fantasy Encyclopedias*, both of which glory in the meaning of their chosen subjects. So tightly focused is Fulton's book that you won't discover, for example, which episodes of *BS* or *Trek* have won awards (either within or without the SF field). Nor the referential richness of *BS*, nor any comparisons with anything other than different TV programmes. What you do get is an astonishingly complete set of episode guides to every SF TV series you've ever heard of, plus a lot you haven't. It also includes sections on one-off dramas and animation. But its claim to being an encyclopedia is seriously flawed: it's organised by series and there is no index, thus you can't, for instance, easily find out what programmes Nigel Kneale had a hand in, what episodes of *Dr Who* Douglas Adams was involved with, or find all of Harlan Ellison's TV work, without going through the entire book. This is a real pity, and greatly reduces the book's usefulness. Nevertheless, what is on offer is done very well, even if the critiques are sometimes a little bland. Recommended, with reservations.

Kevin J. Anderson & Rebecca Moesta *Star Wars Young Jedi Knights: Lightsaber* (Bantam: 21 Mar. £3.99 pb, 217pp/15pp trailers) — YA spinoff from a husband and wife team, fourth in an eleven-book series following the adventures of the twin children of Han Solo and Princess Leia at Luke Skywalker's Jedi Knight Academy.

Kevin J. Anderson & Rebecca Moesta *Star Wars Young Jedi Knights: Darkest Knight* (Bantam: 21 Mar. £3.99 pb, 216pp/10pp trailers) — As above. Book 5.

Kevin J. Anderson & Rebecca Moesta *Star Wars Young Jedi Knights: Jedi Under Siege* (Bantam: 21 Mar. £3.99 pb, 218pp/12pp trailers) — As above. Book 6.

Debbie Notkin & Roger Stewart (eds) *The Outer Limits Vol. 1* (Bantam: 4 Apr. £4.99 pb) — Anth. of stories based on (or the sources of) episodes from both the original 60s TV series and the 1995 relaunch. Includes Harlan Ellison 'Soldier' (the source for the movie *Terminator*), Diane Duane 'It Crawled Out of the Woodwork', Howard V. Hendrix 'If These Walls Could Talk', and John M. Ford 'The Sixth Finger'. See below for the second volume.

N. E. Genge *The Lexicon: Anti-Walters to Zuni* (Pan: 4 Apr. £7.99 pb, 177pp) — "An unofficial X-Files guide to people, places and proprietary phrases". Now, I've never seen *The X-Files* (get up, please!), so this is incomprehensible to me. It's an alphabetical list of things

referenced in the show, and is possibly meant to be amusing: "Trenchcoat: useful for hiding pregnancies". There are stock photos, an episode guide, and a diary. Genge (a woman!) is the author of the *Unofficial X-Files Companions*, has written for Asimov's and lives in Newfoundland.

Jeanne Cavellos *Babylon 5: The Shadow Within* (Bantam: 18 Apr. £4.99 pb, 258pp) — *BS* Book 87. Cavellos is a creative writing lecturer at a college in New Hampshire.

★ Bill Rickman *The Chalice* (Macmillan: 9 May; £16.99 hb, 548pp) — "A *Glastonbury* ghost story". Rickman confidently uses the scale for this fantasy/horror story concerning the Grail allegedly brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea (and its possible opposite), family secrets, travellers and road protesters, a possible reincarnation of Dion Fortune (who, though she sounds like a 50s crooner, was in fact a noted fantasist and mystic of the 1920s), dog-eared hippies, John Cooper Powys, feminist pagans, apocalyptic visions, feeble bishops, antiquarian bookdealers, Old Pory / New Age conflicts, and a haunted bus. Set in a lightly-fictionalised Glastonbury, it contains characters from Rickman's *Crybe* — notably Joe Powys (no relation — or he?) and his three-legged dowsing dog — and, like all his books, gets in a plug for the Incredible String Band, thus immediately endearing himself to your editor. Reminiscent of Kim Newman's *Adler-sei* Jago in its pleasingly caricatured evocation of an English country town and its denizens, *The Chalice* is a more amusing entertainment though no less enjoyable; it's perhaps only let down by a slightly punctured ending. A smashing one-reading read, and recommended.

★ Jane Killick *Babylon 5 Season By Season: Signs and Portents* (Bantam: 9 May; £7.99 pb, 184pp/8pp colour ill.) — Episode guide and critiques on the first season from a British writer, with comments from JMS, the directors and technical staff, and cast members. Unusually for this sort of book, the approach is not uncritical, and Killick brings a sure knowledge of its tropes.

Jane Killick *Babylon 5 Season By Season: The Coming of Shadow* (Bantam: 23 May; £7.99 pb) — As above, but about the second series.

Al Sarrantino *Babylon 5: Personal Agendas* (Bantam: 23 May; £4.99 pb, 212pp) — *BS* Book 88.

Debbie Notkin & Roger Stewart (eds) *The Outer Limits Vol. 2* (Bantam: 23 May; £4.99 pb, 232pp) — Anth. of stories based on (or the sources of) episodes from both the original 60s TV series and the 1995 relaunch. Includes Fredric Brown 'Arena' (originally published in 1944, this inspired the episode 'Fun and Games' as well as a *Star Trek* episode), Diane Duane 'The Choice', Michael Marano 'A Feasibility Study', and Richard A. Lupoff 'The Message'.

Kathryn M. Drennan *Babylon 5: To Dream in the City of Sorrows* (Bantam: 25 Jul; £4.99 pb) — *BS* Book 89.

Legend



Including Arrow, Century, Hutchinson, Heinemann

Donald James Monstrum (Century: 1 Jun; £9.99 pb, 416pp) — Near-future political-thriller cum murder-mystery, set in Russia early next century.

★ Greg Bear *Slant* (1 Jun; £16.99 hb, 491pp) — "Tell all the truth / but tell it slant" is the Emily Dickinson epigram for this near-future SF novel, a sequel to *Queen of Angels*. Most people are Theraped, trained to ensure mental stability (and conformity), but their problems seem to be returning. In a cinematic plot, policeman Mary Choy, the AI Jill, a sex artist and a mysterious mercenary get melodramatically involved with a slightly implausible secret conspiracy based in libertarian freehold Green Idaho. There's much nanotech and talky discussion of sexual rôles (to a fairly conservative conclusion). I kept being reminded of John Brunner, in particular *Stand on Zanzibar* and *The Jagged Orbit* — there's a much-quoted sociologist, happening-world-style inserts, a similar mix of action and social/economic theorising, a pleasure in neologisms. It doesn't quite match the excellent *QoA* as a novel (it's not as unified) but is nonetheless recommended. Serious gripe: the cover art — I suspect it's Jim Burns — is uncredited.

Graham Masterton *The Chosen Child* (Heinemann: 30 Jun; £17.99 hb) — "Horror. When a popular radio presenter is found savagely beheaded in the excavations for a new luxury hotel in Warsaw, superstitious workers go on strike, blaming a demon and jeopardising the career of high-flying executive Sarah Leonard." The political and social cauldron of Eastern Europe since the collapse of Communism is providing much grist to writers.

Nancy McKenzie *The Child Queen* (Jul; £5.99 pb) — Arthurian fantasy telling the story of Guinevere; the sequel, *The High Queen*, is due in September.

★ Tim Powers *Earthquake Weather* (3 Jul; £17.99 hb, 512pp) — Contemporary urban fantasy.

The supernatural king of the West Coast of the USA is dead, killed by one of the people in Jenia Plummer's head, though his body does not decay. She must pay by allowing her body to be used in reviving him. But there may be a new king, a 14-year-old boy carrying the ghost of Edison and with an unhealed stigma in his side.

John Case *The Genesis Code* (Century: 1 Aug; £15.99 hb, 384pp) — Case is the pseudonym of an American investigative journalist, and this science-based thriller — flatteringly blurb by Norman Mailer — concerns a scientist with a secret that so alarms the priest to whom he confesses that he is refused absolution; instead the Vatican is informed. Meanwhile in Washington, a bereaved man investigates the death of his sister and nephew and uncovers elusive connections between the events.

Anne Rice *Servant of the Bones* (Arrow: Aug; £5.99 pb, 400pp) — Romantic horror. Azriel, a ghost transformed into a genie, travels through the centuries and witnesses a murder in contemporary New York; he decides to avenge.

Elizabeth Moon *Sheepfarmer's Daughter* (1 Aug; £5.99 pb, 512pp) — Heroic fantasy, book one of 'The Deeds of Paksenarrion'. (I wonder if the title has the same fifty-choy connotations in the US: "She was only a sheepfarmer's daughter, but..." Or perhaps it's just me.) Paks refuses to marry the pig farmer down the road and instead runs off to join the army. The sequel, *Divided Allegiance*, is due in December.

N. E. Genge *The Unofficial Millennium Companion* (Century: 1 Sep; £5.99 pb, 288pp ill.) — Tie-in to the *Chris Carter* TV series.

Katie Elliot King's Dragon (1 Sep; £15.99 hb, 544pp) — Epic fantasy, vol. 1 of 'Crown of Stars'.

Charles Handy *The Hungry Spirit* (Hutchinson: 1 Sep; £12.99 hb, 288pp) — Non-fiction from a regular 'Thought for the Day' contributor on Radio 4's *Today*, in which he "offers a radical and challenging view of the future [and] examines the false certainties of science and religion. Handy then builds a new theory of meaning based on the search for identity, the rôle of the arts and the idea of immortality."

Nancy McKenzie *The High Queen* (1 Sep; £5.99 pb, 448pp) — Arthurian fantasy continuing the story of Guinevere begun in *The Child Queen*.

★ Terry Brooks *Running With the Demon* (1 Sep; £16.99 hb, 608pp) — Brooks departs from his usual venues to examine an eruption of fantasy creatures into the small town of Hopewell, Illinois, culminating in a battle between light and darkness which must be resolved by the Fourth of July.

Stephen Fry [intitied] (Hutchinson: 1 Oct; £16.99 hb, 320pp) — Fry's autobiography, from "a wealth of exposures, arrests and prison terms" to "the humiliation and degradation of his notorious downward spiral into a career in comedy and acting." And writing of novels. Spiritual renewal was found in Bend Sinister's Bitterness.

Stephen Fry *Making History* (Arrow: Oct; £5.99 pb, 320pp) — Alternative-history / alternate-world story. A physicist waves quantum waves and causes the premature death of Hitler — a strange new world results.

Key

pb = paperback; hb = hardback; tp = trade (large format) paperback; pp = extent ill. — illustrated; ed = edited; R (x) = reissue / reprint (first publication date)

GN = Graphic Novel; AB = AudioBook; YA = Young Adult

coll. = story collection (same author); anth. = anthology (different authors)

★ = Highlight ✪ = Editor's choice

✪ = First UK edition

Treat future dates with caution. All unquoted remarks by Chris Terran.

Quoted comments are from publishers' material — caveat emptor.

Voyager



Including HarperCollins, Flamingo, Fontana

- Terry Bisson** *The Fifth Element* (12 Jun; £5.99 pb) — Novelisation of the Cannes-opening film from Luc Besson.
- Clive Barker** *Froms of Heaven* (HarperCollins) (12 Jun; £16.99 hb, 378pp) — Three plays, *Crazycase*, *Paradise Street* and *Subtle Bodies*. Barker is willing (ahem) to let these be performed on a non-profit basis by am-dram groups.
- Jim Marrs** *Alien Agenda* (HarperCollins) (30 Jun; £16.99 hb, 434pp ill.) — Non-fiction, 'the untold story of the extraterrestrials among us.' How can I put this politely? I can't: this book is completely barking. A compendium of rumors, presented by an astonishingly glib writer (Marrs wrote one of the books on which the film JFK was based) with an amazing eye for what constitutes a reliable source (e.g. a tv broadcast on crop circles later admitted to be an April Fool) and an ah-hah!-What-do-those-so-called-scientists-make-of-that-then? approach, this should be required reading for all who think humans are rational beings. Gotta laugh, haven't you? Recommended, for all the wrong reasons.
- Eric Eftman** *The X-Files: Our Town* (1 Jul; £3.99 pb) — Novelisation of episode 24, second season.
- Alex Kershaw** *Jack London: A Life* (HarperCollins) (1 Jul; £20.00 hb, 352pp ill.) — Biography of the author of the fascist dystopia *The Iron Heel*. Delayed from Feb.
- Peter Atkins** *Big Thunder* (HarperCollins) (1 Jul; £16.99 hb, 352pp) — Delayed from Apr 96, then Feb 97 (will it ever come out?). A Kim Newman-esque sounding tale concerning Valentine Dyson, vicious double avenger of the 1930's pulp magazine *Strange Thrills*, who materialises in present-day Manhattan when his creator falls into a coma after a car crash. He saves a girl from a mugger who he then tortures to death, 'the while delivering a lecture on the nature of the Universe, of reality before the Fall, the true significance of the Alchemists' Great Work — and the approaching reconciliation of the living with the dead.' Dyson goes on to make a film, 'Big Thunder', and extract vengeance on its viewers. Liverpool-born (now Los Angeles resident) Atkins wrote the screenplays for three of the four *Heilaser* films, and this is his second novel: the first was *Morningstar*.
- Mike Lunnon-Wood** *Angel Seven* (1 Jul; £5.99 pb, 320pp) — Techno-thriller about a group of conscience-wracked scientists who attempt to bring about world peace with a super-fast stealth plane.
- Richard West** *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Daniel Defoe* (HarperCollins) (1 Jul; £20.00 hb, 352pp ill.) — Biography. As well as *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe also wrote proto-fantasy, and ghost stories.
- Mike Jefferies** *Threads of Magic* (7 Jul; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, fourth and final volume in the *Elundium* series.
- David & Leigh Eddings** *Polaris the Sorceress* (7 Jul; £17.99 hb, c800pp) — A 'companion novel to *Belgarath the Sorcerer*', and the final book in the *Belgarath* sequence.
- Clive Barker** *Imajica 1: The Fifth Dimension and Imajica 2: The Reconciliation* (10 Jul; £5.99 pb each) — Reissue in two volumes of Barker's 854-page 1991 dark fantasy *Imajica*.
- Michael Marshall Smith** *Spares* (17 Jul; £5.99 pb, 305pp) — Smith was in the Cambridge Footlights, where he was a contemporary of Newman and Baddiel, and in the 80s co-wrote and performed the BBC Radio 4 comedy series *And Now, In Colour*. But you won't find much echo of this in his st, which, though touched with irony and a certain bleakness, has a distinctly American flavour. *Spares* is about a loser with a heart of gold, who attempts to make human the creatures, cloned from rich bastards, who exist purely to provide spare parts. Smith was amongst the parish group found lurking outside the Science Museum every so often at the recent Clarke

Award ceremony, banished for the sin of smoking. His hero smokes too. Recommended.

Katherine Kerr & Mark Kreighbaum *Palace* (21 Jul; £5.99 pb) — Science fantasy, first volume in a new series. 'Vi-Kata, the deadliest assassin in the Pinch, has been hired to murder two seemingly unconnected humans in Pleasure Sect: Vida, living in an upmarket brothel, and Arno, heir to the head of the Cybergrid — overseers of the virtual reality computer network, the Map.'

- Robert Silverberg** *Ring the Changes* (21 Jul; £6.99 pb) — Volume 5 of Silverberg's collected short stories, covering the period when he produced the splendid (if gloomy) novels *Dying Inside* and *The Stochastic Man*.
- David & Leigh Eddings** *Belgarath the Sorcerer* (22 Jul; £6.99 pb)
- Janny Wurts** *Alliance of Light* (24 Jul; £16.99 hb, £9.99 pt) — Fantasy, fourth volume of 'Wars of Light and Shadow'.
- Elen Steiber** *The X-Files: Empathy* (1 Aug; £3.99) — Novelisation.
- Dean Devlin, Roland Emmerich & Stephen Moistad** *Independence Day: The Prequel* (1 Aug; £16.99 hb, c300pp) — Tie-in intended to plug the holes left by the film, where did the aliens come from? How was their existence kept secret? 'Reveals generations of conspiracy.'
- Kevin J. Anderson** *The X-Files V: Antibodies* (1 Aug; £16.99 hb) — Fifth original novel based on the tv series.
- Sasha Miller** *Ladyford* (4 Aug; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy, Colorado-resident Miller has written shared-world fantasies (in Andre Norton's *Witch World*) but here creates her own, in which a monarch's daughter is named her son and in a male-dominated realm. She is given an impossible quest to fetch a dragon's eye . . . and must also remain a virgin despite much temptation. 'Not for the prudish,' says Raymond E. Feist.
- Stephen Moistad** *Independence Day: Silent Zone* (18 Aug; £16.99 hb) — 'The authorised [sic] novel of the cover-up.'
- Stephen Baxter** *Voyager* (18 Aug; £6.99 pb) — Paperback of the Clarke Award-nominated alternative history of NASA.
- Stephen Baxter** *Titan* (21 Aug; £16.99 hb, c500pp) — The NASA/ESA probe Cassini is scheduled to reach Saturn's moon Titan in 2004, and here Baxter postulates that it discovers ammonia-based life. NASA is moribund, and following a Challenger-type disaster grand-mother and astronaut Paula Benacerraf is appointed to dismantle the Shuttle fleet. But she comes under the influence of a maverick JPL scientist and instead reefs the ageing Saturn, Apollo and Shuttle spacecraft with state-of-the-art technology, and, despite opposition from the military, a last-gasp manned mission to Titan is launched. The first fruit of Baxter's researches into NASA and the US space program was the alternative history *Voyage*, with its well-drawn lead female hero, *Titan* returns to near-future sf and promises much.
- Les Martin** *The X-Files: Fresh Bones* (1 Sep; £3.99 pb) — Novelisation of episode 15, second season.
- Elizabeth Hand** *Millennium #1: 2000* (1 Sep; £5.99 pb)
- Julian May** *Star Trek* (1 Sep; £5.99 pb) — Conclusion of the 'Trillium' saga.
- Kathryn S. Starbuck** *The House on the Hill* (1 Sep; £5.99 pb) — Fantasy. A woman returns to her childhood home, a little-bit house which contains entrances to fantasy lands. Starbuck is married to Raymond E. Feist and lives in San Diego.
- Philip K. Dick** *Our Friends From Frodo* 8 (15 Sep [R 1970]; £5.99 pb) — Fine late-period Dick, one of the last 'normal' of novels he wrote.
- Kim Stanley Robinson** *Loehenge* (15 Sep [R 1984]; £5.99 pb) — An enigmatic artifact is found on Pluto. One of Robinson's earliest explorations of the unreliability of history, and recommended.
- Kim Stanley Robinson** *Antarctica* (18 Sep; £16.99 hb) — Near-future eco-thriller. A radical environmentalist group defends Antarctica's claim to be the last wilderness. Robinson's first novel since his acclaimed *Mars* trilogy.

Titan



Michael Singer *Batman & Robin: The Making of the Movie* (6 Jun; £3.99 pb, ill.) — Follows the making of the film from comic to screen, via screenplay, casting, filming and sfx.

- Marcus Hearn & Alan Barnes** *The Hammer Story* (26 Jun; £24.99 hb, 120pp ill.) — A history of Hammer Films, 40 years after its first horror movie, *The Curse of Frankenstein*, though its success dates back to the 'Quatermass' films a few years earlier. All of the classic films are examined in detail, and not uncritically: the risible *One Million Years BC* was 'beautifully filmed but hopelessly naïve' and 'seems so dated today as to feel near-prehistoric'. There's some splendid material here, for example an angry letter from Dennis Wheatley about the 1976 version of *To the Devil a Daughter*, which 'has no relation whatever to my novel and is a hopeless mess' and 'an appalling travesty'. There's an introduction by Christopher Lee, coverage of the (disappointing) tv spin-offs, and a complete filmography; but — for shame — there's no index. Recommended, especially if your late-night viewing in the 70s was dominated by these wonderfully British productions. And Madeleine Smith . . .
- Joseph Cochran** *The Babylon Project Rule Book* (14 Jul; £14.99 pt, 196pp ill.) — Provides the basic rules and a sample session for a role-playing game based on *Babylon 5*. Includes much previously unavailable background info on the *B5* universe, so it's of interest even if you're not an RPGer. Although this production is approved by JMS, it's marred by a large number of dreadfully amateurish paintings.
- Mike Richardson, John Arcudi, Damon Willis & Karl Story** *Aliens: Genocide* (1 Jul; £10.99 pt, 122pp ill.) — Introduction by Barbara Kessel. Also available:
- Jim Woodring & Kilian Plunkett** *Labyrinth* (11 Jul; £11.99 pt, 136pp ill.) — Introduction by Stephen Perry. Both these are 'new editions' of *Aliens*-based GNs, with new covers by John Bolton, and reworked scripts so they fit more closely with the films. The *Aliens* universe — as presented here — is grim indeed. Motivation is greed or base lust or power, the only solutions are violence and death. Just like the comics of my youth, except that it now applies to the 'heroes'

too. And indeed, the quality of artwork does not seem to have improved much either, though both these books are superbly printed. What bothers me about most GNs is the lack of subtext, the removal of the levels of interpretation any reader can bring to even the most workaday prose. Bloody and muscle-bound, these gory pages seem to lack the empathy — the Beauty & the Beast or King Kong subtext, if you like — present in at least the first *Alien* film, along with the grace, the chitlany and fitness of the monster itself. All here is reduced to lights (pun intended) and action. Thus they lose power, and interest, at least for this reader. But then along comes . . .

- Neil Gaiman, Michael Zulli, Charles Vess, John J. Muth & Dave McKean** *The Sandman: The Wake* (11 Jul; £12.99 pt, 192pp ill.) . . . and the possibilities of the form unfold, gloriously. The tenth and final *Sandman* GN, first published in DC's *The Sandman* comics issues 70-75 and in hardcover in Feb 97, contains *The Wake* (ill. Zulli), *Exiles* (ill. Muth) and *The Tempest* (ill. Vess), with overall design and cover by McKean, and an introduction from Mike Glimore. The artwork is superb throughout, and perfectly complements each story: from Morpheus's wake, to an Oriental's exile — this is particularly effective — to the coda, in which Shakespeare, whose *Midsummer Night's Dream* Gaiman acknowledges as the major force behind the work, lives a dream and meets his maker (as it were). There is tenderness and lust, loss and humour, love and an intense, unsettling strangeness. Gaiman isn't afraid to be clever, but neither does he ever lose sight of the essentials of the story, and the tales herein deserve to be told, and read. If you've sneered at *B5* — as I have — I do urge you to give *Sandman* a go. Highly recommended, and your editor's choice this issue.
- Don Shay & Bill Norton** *Alien: The Special Effects* (24 Jul; £12.99 pt, 144pp ill.) — Reprint of three highly detailed articles (originally published in *Cinefix* magazine) on the special effects used in the 'Alien' films, with many revealing photos and interesting sidelights on the making of the films. The story of designer Giger's involvement is fascinating, as is the account of creating and filming the infamous 'chestburster' sequence in the first film. It's full of comments from such as Ridley Scott and Giger, the thoughts and reminiscences of the *sfx* team, and the tensions that surround any film's making. Recommended.
- Frank Miller** *That Yellow Bastard* (25 Jul; £16.99 hb, ill.) — GN, the fourth story set in Miller's 'Sin City', renowned for its noir grit and B&W artwork.

Orion

Including Millennium, Phoenix, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Dent, Everyman



Windsor Chortlon *Latitude Zero* (1 Jun; £16.99 hb, 384pp) — "A group of mismatched adults is marooned on an offshore — is there another kind? — island in the tropics. The veneer of civilisation quickly rubs off and the group splits." Unsurprisingly, the PR compares it to *Lord of the Flies*.

Thomas Richards *The Myths and Legends of Star Trek* (16 Jun; £14.99 hb, 180pp) — Reveals the origins of *Trek* storylines in ancient epics, traditional romances and folk tales, from which Gene Roddenberry nicked his ideas. Duty done, I can say: Would you buy a used opinion from this author? Try our FREE SAMPLES and see for yourself.

"In the *Star Trek* [sic] movies Luke Skywalker is driven to act out his destiny as a Jedi knight. In *Asimov's* [sic] *Dangerous Triology* the predictions of a single man date the fate of the galaxy." (The book is littered with this kind of thing.)

"The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle states that observers always interfere with the things that they are observing." (No it doesn't. Now, hold on to your eyeballs.)

"Like any great work of art or literature the *Star Trek* universe has an integrity and resonance all its own unvalued by any other kind of science fiction, whether movie, television show or novel."

Star Trek "utterly supersedes, both in depth and breadth, the science fictions which have come before it."

This from a Harvard academic teaching English and American literature.

★ **Ric Alexander** (ed.) *Cyber-Killers* (16 Jun; £16.99 hb, £9.99 pb, 408pp) — St anth. of 24 stories about computer crime, all reprints. Contributors include Pratchett, Bear ("Blood Music"), Anderson, Haldeman, Clarke, Silverberg, Banks (A Gift From the Culture), Herbert, Dick ("Imposter"), Bester ("Fondly Farewell"), Harrison, Niven (A Kind of Murder), Ballard ("Zone of Terror"), Shirley, Gibson ("Johnny Mnemonic"), Cadogan, Newman, Zelazny, Watson and others. Introduction by Peter F. Hamilton. An interesting take of this anthology is seeing how authors' predictions have turned out, now the net is a reality — when most of the stories were written many of the writers had never used a computer, let alone logged on. There are three sections, "Network Terrorists", "Robot Crime" and "Virtual Murder", with the stories somewhat shoehorned into them. There are a few omissions such as John Varley ("Overdrawn at the Memory Bank" seems an obvious choice), but overall this is a fine collection of classic tales. Recommended.

★ **John Barnes** *Apocalypses and Apostrophes* (Millennium: 1 Jul; £16.99 hb, £9.99 pb, 256pp) — Coll. from one of the best US writers, including some new material. "Some of the stories depict the end of the world, some are speeches addressed to a non-existent being or something which cannot understand human speech."

Nathan Archer *Cold War* (Millennium: 1 Jul; £16.99 hb, 304pp) — Latest "Predator" tie-in. **Elizabeth Peewsey** *The Dewstone Quest* (1 Jul; £9.99 hb, £3.99 pb, 218pp) — YA dragon fantasy, sequel to *The Talking Head*. "A Noddy for the 90s."

Susan Greenfield *The Human Brain: A Guided Tour* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Jul; £11.99 hb, 176pp il.) — Non-fiction account of the workings of the brain from a physicist who was the first woman to give the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures, in 1994. Retitled from *The Most Private Place*.

Adam Nichols *The Pathless Way* (Jul; £4.99 pb) — Fantasy.

Adam Nichols *War of the Lords Veil* (Jul; £4.99 pb) — Fantasy.

Myr Corran Dardell (Jul; £4.99 pb)

★ **Stephen Baxter** *Gulliverzone* (1 Jul; £9.99 hb, £2.99 pb, 112pp) — Baxter's first young adult book concerns three children in a virtual reality theme park based on Gulliver's Travels, and their struggle with the Lilliputians. This is the first of six linked novels using the World Wide Web as a starting point; the second is:

Stephen Bowdell *Dreamcastle* (1 Jul; £9.99 hb, £2.99 pb, 112pp) — A VR-based D&D game on the WWW goes wrong ...

Liza Picard *Restoration London: Everyday Life in London in the 1660s* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Jul; £20 hb, 320pp il.) — Restoration London is a popular fantasy setting — Mary Gentle's *White Crow* sequence owes much to it — and this book uses contemporary sources to elucidate how life was actually lived then: the houses, gardens, cooking, clothes and jewellery, cosmetics, hairdressing, housework, laundry and shopping, sex, education,

hobbies, etiquette, religion and popular beliefs."

Don Cupitt *After God* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Aug; £11.99 hb, 160pp) — In which the readable theologian Cupitt "looks forward to the development of religious forms more appropriate to contemporary society, approaches that move beyond the need for belief in a god and towards a spirituality more akin to art than ideology."

Dante Alighieri *The Inferno* (Dent: 1 Aug; £12.99 pb, 448pp) — New verse translation, in a bilingual edition.

★ **Michael Swanwick** *Jack Faust* (1 Aug; £16.99 hb, £9.99 pb, c320pp) — Starts off as a retelling of the standard *Faust* legend, but knowing Swanwick it won't stop there.

Dan Klein & **Hans Teesma** *Where's Elvis?* (Weidenfeld Illustrated: 1 Aug; £9.99 hb, 80pp il.) — Can't resist this. You've seen the *Where's Wally?* books, right? Here's one with 32 crowded photographs of famous places and events — Nixon's funeral, a recent Rolling Stones concert — all allegedly containing Elvis. Oh, minutes of fun, and soon to be on a remainder shelf near you.

Various *Mysteries of the Ancient World* (Weidenfeld Illustrated: 1 Aug; £9.99 pb, 40pp il.) — Series of short guides to archaeological and historical, er, mysteries, all with 30 colour illustrations. Titles include *Leylines*, *Stone Circles*, *Lost Atlantis*, *The Alchemists*, *The Holy Grail*, *Mummies*. More to come in October.

Michael Moorcock *The War Amongst the Angels* (Aug; £9.99 pb)

Angus Wells *Exile's Challenge* (Aug; £6.99 pb)

Phil Whitaker *Eclipse of the Sun* (Phoenix: 1 Aug; £14.99 hb, 256pp) — Love story set in India during a solar eclipse.

Timothy Ferris *The Whole Shebang: A State of the Universe(s) Report* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Sep; £20.00 hb, 416pp) — Upsum of current astronomical thinking. Pity about the title.

★ **Greg Egan** *Diapora* (1 Sep; £16.99 hb, £9.99 pb, c320pp) — At last, a new Egan novel. By the end of the 30th century humanity has spread out into the universe and split into three: flesh and blood humans, "gleisner" robots embodying individual humans, and "poises", supercomputers containing billions of human minds. And that's all I can tell you ...

Peter James *The Truth* (1 Sep; £15.99 hb, £9.99 pb, 576pp) — Horror novel from the author of *The Alchemist*, in which Aleister Crowley's mentor Emil Sarotini appears to have returned from the dead and is paying a woman to have his surrogate child.

Roger MacBride Allen *Isaac Asimov's Utopia* (Sep; £4.99 pb) — Continuation of Asimov's robot theme.

Ellen Datlow (ed.) *Lethal Kisses* (Sep; £5.99 pb) — Anth. of stories themed on jealousy and revenge.

Paul M. Sammon *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner* (Sep; £9.99 pb, 442pp il.)

Mary Norton *The Borrowers Omnibus* (Sep; £14.99 hb, 640pp il.) — Contains all four "Borrowers" books; Orion are also issuing them singly at £3.99 each, all illustrated by Diane Stanley. The *Fantasy Encyclopedia* describes *The Borrowers* as "one of the modern classics of children's fantasy", and this is being revised to tie in with a new feature film version, out in BBC tv series and a 1973 to movie. Norton, who died in 1992, also wrote *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*.

Lawrence Wright *Twins, Genes and Human Nature* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: 1 Sep; £12.99 hb, 176pp) — Issues of human nature, identity and freedom in the light of recent research into twins.

★ **James Buxton** *Phly* (1 Sep; £16.99 hb, 352pp) — Follow-up to the extremely effective dark fantasy *The Wishing Tree*. A haunted-house story set in Bernadette, Delayed from June.

Travels in Dreamland (1 Sep; £16.99 hb, 320pp il.) — Subtitle "The Secret History of Area 51", a sceptical examination of the location's real role as a test site for advanced aircraft and its attraction to the Fox Mulders of the world, who believe it harbours alien remains and spacecraft.

Jostein Gaarder *Vita Brevis* (Phoenix: 1 Oct; £9.99 hb, 128pp) — Gaarder is a Norwegian philosopher and the author of the impressive fantasy *Sophie's World*, and this short novel concerns a manuscript purporting to be a letter to St Augustine from Flavia Aemilia, the woman he renounced for chastity ("But not yet, as he famously said).

Ellette Abecassis *The Qumran Mystery* (1 Dec; £16.99 hb, 384pp) — Fantasy thriller about the life and death of Christ and the disappearance of a Dead Sea Scroll that would uncover the truth about it. A bestseller in France. Delayed from July.

Corgi

Including Bantam, Doubleday



Robert Rankin *Nostradamus Ate My Hamster* (May; £5.99 pb) — Unclassifiable humour in which Fudgepacker, a director of 50s B-movies, turns his hand to prop-supplying ... but they don't make his kind of movies any more.

★ **Robert Rankin** *Sprout Mask Replica* (Doubleday: 1 May; £16.99) — Never thought I'd see a Captain Beefheart reference in an sf book. This humorous fantasy defies synopsis (though the PR tries bravely, but I can tell you that sprouts feature a lot).

Barbara Hambly *Star Wars: Planet of Twilight* (Bantam: 1 May; £12.99) — The loss of Hamby to the tie-in market has been regretted by some, but we can hope that she will write the quality of *Spinnoff*.

Terry Pratchett *Eye* (Jun; £5.50 ab)

Terry Pratchett *Feet of Clay* (1 Jun; £5.50 ab)

A. C. Crispin *Star Wars: The Paradise Shore* (Bantam: Jun; £5.99 pb) — The story of Han

Solo's late teens, and "how he escaped an unhappy adopted home situation to carve out a new life for himself as a pilot."

George Foy *The Shift* (Bantam: Jun; £5.99 pb) — St horror with a premise similar to King's *The Dark Half*: burned-out tv scriptwriter Alex Munro is introduced to Virtex, a perfected virtual reality technology. He creates the story of Fishman, a serial killer loose in 1850s New York, whose nemesis is a cop called Alex Munro. But Fishman seems to have escaped into the present-day world, and is after the real Alex ...

Anne McCaffrey *Red Star Rising* (10 Jul; £5.99 pb) — Another Pern story, with dragons, threads, winsome heroines and creakily melodramatic plotting.

A. C. Crispin *Star Wars: The Hutt Gambit* (Bantam: 11 Sep; £5.99 pb) — Sequel to *The Paradise Shore* continuing the story of Han Solo's early life.

John Saul *The Presence* (Bantam: 11 Sep; £15.99 hb) — Horror. An archeologist is commissioned to catalogue an industrialist's collection of curios. But some prehistoric specimens seem impossible, and not so ancient as they appear ...

William Peter Blatty *The Exorcist* (11 Sep (R 1971); £5.99 pb) — Reissue of the classic horror novel, memorably filmed in 1973.

The Rest



Jonathan Cape
Paper Tiger
Bantam
Vintage

Shirley Jackson *The Masterpieces of Shirley Jackson* (Raven: 1996: £7.99 pb, 544pp) — Not new, but I occasionally get asked about Jackson's books. This omnibus contains *The Haunting of Hill House*, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* and *The Lottery*. Recommended.

Phyllis Eisenstein (ed.) *Spec-Lit I* (Columbia College, Chicago: 1981: \$6.95 tp, 175pp) — Anth. of 13 rather good stories from students of the Columbia College Fiction Writing Department, where Eisenstein is the tutor, along with contributions from Chicago-based pro Gene Wolfe ("The Changeling", originally published in 1968 in *Orbit 3*) and Algis Budrys ("Living Alone in the Jungle", previously unpublished).

Mike Ashley (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Comic Fantasy* (Raven: 1997: £11.99 pb, 512pp) — Anth. including stories from Pratchett, Adams, Milligan, Holt and many others.

Joseph McBride *Steven Spielberg* (Faber: 1997: £17.99 hb, 480pp ill.) — Critical biography.

Patrick McGilligan *Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast* (Faber: 1997: £20.00 hb, 560pp ill.) — Critical biography of the director of *Metropolis*.

George Lucas *A New Hope* (Faber: 1997: £7.99 pb, 96pp ill.) — The original screenplay. Also available, with similar details: **Leigh Brackett & Lawrence Kasdan** *The Empire Strikes Back*; **Lawrence Kasdan & George Lucas** *The Return of the Jedi*. I have a weakness for Brackett: she wrote an s novel called *The Coming of the Terrans*.

Irvine Welsh *Omnibus* (Minerva: Jun: £9.99 tp, 900pp) — Contains *Trainspotting*, *The Acid House* (col. incl. some fantasy), and *Marboon* *Scott Nightmares*. Excellent value.

Paul McKenna *The Paranormal World of Paul McKenna* (Faber: Jun: £5.99 pb, 192pp) — The tech hypnotist's opinions on UFOs, ETs, ghosts, ESP, precognition, reincarnation and suchlike. Guess what? "In the world of the paranormal the easiest thing is to be sceptical and superior, it is much more difficult to be honestly open-minded." I could write an essay on what's wrong with that sentence.

Alan Guth *The Inflationary Universe* (Jonathan Cape: 1997: £18.99 hb, 368pp ill.) — Non-fiction account of Guth's "inflationary cosmology" theory, which attempts to describe what happened before the Big Bang. In essence: you are a quantum fluctuation.

★ **Angela Carter** *Shaking a Leg* (Chatto & Windus: 1997: £20.00 hb, 512pp) — Coll. of Carter's journalism, including pieces on films, food, feminism, fantasy, jeans, Japan, science fiction, sex, Virginia Woolf and Bob Dylan. Much here is collected for the first time. Recommended.

Phillip Kerr Esau (Vintage: Jul: £5.99 pb, 368pp) — Crichton-like science thriller about the discovery of some startling hominid remains in Nepal. Not to be confused with the similarly themed and titled *Born Esau* by John Gribbin & Douglas Orrell (1982).

Po Bronson *The First \$20 Million is Always the Hardest* (Secker & Warburg: Jul: £9.99 tp, 288pp) — Contemporary novel about high-tech culture, from a Wired journalist. A computer engineer is given a project to develop a radically simpler and cheaper computer: "social idealism clashes with money-fever in this suspenseful novel about what it takes to succeed as an entrepreneur in Silicon Valley".

Jane Mendelsohn *I Was Amelia Earhart* (Vintage: Jul: £9.99 pb, 160pp) — Much-praised surreal version of aviatrix Earhart's story — it's been compared to J. G. Ballard.

Reuben Hersh *What is Mathematics, Really?* (Jonathan Cape: Jul: £18.99 hb, 384pp) — A Douglas Adams-type title (you almost expect a subtitle of "I Mean, When It Comes Right Down To It?") conceals a non-fiction account of various philosophical problems posed by mathematics, such as "in what sense do mathematical objects exist? Hersh poses 'humanist mathematics' as an answer, which denies any absolutist position; not a Platonist, then.

★ **Constance Penley** *NASA/Trek: Popular Science and Sex in America* (Verso: Jul: £11.00 pb, 170pp) — Non-fiction examination by an American professor of women's studies and film critic of the interplay between real-life big science, as personified by NASA, and the fantasy world of *Star Trek*, paying particular attention to the part sex plays, there's discussion of NASA's institutionalised sexism (Christa McAuliffe was picked for the ill-fated teacher-in-space program quite deliberately for her "medocrity", Sally Ride because she wouldn't make waves), and of slash: amateur pornography — mostly written and consumed by women — concentrating on gay affairs between media characters.

Angela Carter *The Curious Room* (Vintage: Jul: £9.99 pb, 528pp) — Carter's collected dramatic works, including *Vampires*, *The Company of Wolves*, and *The Magic Toyshop*. And, I hope, her wonderful radio version of *Puss-in-Boots*.

Angela Carter *Love* (Vintage: Jul: £9.99 pb, 128pp) — Reissued novella.

Mike Ashley (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Fairy Tales* (Robinson: Jul: £9.99 pb, 544pp ill.) — Anth. of fairy tales from the last 300 years, from Andersen to Dickens, Grimm to Tanith Lee. A Mine to C. S. Lewis.

Marie Darrieussecq *Pig Tales* (Faber: Jul: £9.99 pb, 160pp) — Debut fantasy about a masseuse who slowly transforms into a pig, wanders the sewers in search of food and meets up with a werewolf. A bestseller in France.

Jonathan Blum & Kate Orman *Doctor Who: Vampire Science* (BBC: 7 Jul: £4.99 pb, 288pp) — Set in contemporary San Francisco and featuring the 8th Doctor, this spinoff features the Vampires, the Time Lords' ancient enemy.

Steve Lyons *Doctor Who: The Murder Game* (BBC: 7 Jul: £4.99 pb, 288pp) — The second Doctor drops in on a murder-mystery weekend being held in 2146 aboard a dilapidated orbiting hotel. Takes place during the tv series "The Power of the Daleks" and "The Highlanders".

Damien Thompson *The End of Time* (Minerva: 7 Jul: £9.99 pb) — An examination of millennial cuts. In the *Daily Telegraph*, J. G. Ballard said the book is "literally a revelation, a detailed map of the battle plan of Armageddon that serves as a guidebook to the heavens and the helix... a superb and often breathtaking account."

Gilbert Adair *Surfing the Zeitgeist* (Faber: Aug: £14.99 hb, 272pp) — Coll. of essays on 90s pop culture from "Britain's leading post-modernist". Andy Butler, watch out.

Ruth Brandon *The Uncertainty Principle* (Vintage: Aug: £5.99 pb, 272pp) — A couple's daughter dies. The father believes that parallel universes exist, and explain ghosts, coincidences and prophetic dreams. The mother is sceptical, until she sees her daughter in a shopping mall.

★ **Anne Rice** *Violets* (Chatto & Windus: 1997: £16.99 hb, 448pp) — Described as a "confessional" novel, this dark fantasy features a mesmerizing and dangerous violinist who appears in contemporary New Orleans and bedazzles Trianna — whose previous life is very similar to Rice's — and takes her back to Beethoven's Vienna in the early 1800s, where she becomes a virtuoso fiddler (ahem) and superstar.

Robert Olsen *Tabloid Dreams* (Minerva: Aug: £6.99 pb, 256pp) — Coll. of articles about bizarre tabloid stories from a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist: "Boy Born With Tattoo of Elvis" and suchlike. US-based, so Freddie Starr and a hamster won't feature, unfortunately.

Barry England *No Man's Land* (Jonathan Cape: 1997: £15.99 hb, 288pp) — After a mysterious catastrophe known only as the Event, civilisation has collapsed, day is night, and millions have died. Ex-soldier John Savage attempts to keep order outside the brutal military regime in the Capital, but comes into conflict.

George Orwell *Complete Works* (Secker & Warburg: Aug: £1.195/£1.250 hb, 20 vols.) — The first price is pre-publication. Edited by Peter Davidson (no, not that one), this is claimed to be the definitive edition of Orwell's writing, and includes much unpublished material. Vols 1-9 contain the novels (available separately for £495/£550), and vols 10-20 (£850/£895) cover reviews, articles, letters, his ever-readable essays and miscellaneous writings.

Frank Harris *Occult Wilde* (Raven: Aug: £7.99 tp, 384pp) — Journalist Harris is best known for the pornographic *My Life and Loves*, but here's his biography of his friend Wilde, reissued to coincide with the Stephen Fry film.

Terrance Dicks *Doctor Who: Kinda* (BBC: 4 Aug: £5.99 AB, 1x90mins) — Abridged version of the novel, read by Peter Davison.

Mark Morris *Doctor Who: The Bodysnatchers* (BBC: 18 Aug: £4.99 pb, 288pp) — Morris came to prominence in the late 80s as a horror writer subsidised by the Enterprise Allowance Scheme, and came up with *Toady* and various other increasingly interesting novels (see, the *Tories* did do some good). Now he's written this spinoff set in London in 1894 wherein the eighth doctor meets the Zygons again, who first appeared battling the fourth doctor.

Christopher Bulis *Doctor Who: The Ultimate Treasure* (BBC: 18 Aug: £4.99 pb, 288pp) — The fifth doctor and Peri visit the planet Gelsandor and get mixed up in a search for lost treasure.

Ian McEwan *Enduring Love* (Jonathan Cape: 1997: £15.99 hb, 304pp) — The double-edged title points to a love story, but laced with McEwan's bitter and dark imagination. If you've enjoyed Chris Priest, try McEwan.

Stephen Jay Gould *The Life of Science* (Vintage: Sep: £8.99 pb, 256pp) — Non-fiction essays on evolution from one of the best science writers around.

★ **Peter Carey** *Jack Maggs* (Faber: 1997: £15.99 hb, 320pp) — New novel from the noted Australian fantasist / magic realist, whose Booker-winning *Oscar and Lucinda* is now being filmed. "A thrilling story of mesmerism, possession, dangerous bargains and illicit love in Victorian London".

Orhan Pamuk *The New Life* (Faber: 1997: £15.99 hb, 304pp) — Fantasy about a magical book whose reader undertakes a metaphysical journey through Turkey in search of its secrets. Pamuk, a Turk, "has earned the right to companions with Borges and Calvino" (NY Times).

★ **Mike Ashley** (ed.) *Shakespearean Whodunnits* (Raven: 1997: £5.99 tp, 472pp) — Anth. of 25 new stories, each a mystery based on a Shakespeare play and its characters. Contributors include Stephen Baxter (it's that man again), Patricia McKillip, Peter Tremayne and others. Sounds intriguing.

Victor Skousen *Celtic Daily Life* (Raven: 1997: £4.99 hb, 64pp) — Shows "how to recreate for yourself aspects of Celtic daily life, such as soaps and perfumes, jewellery, food recipes and natural dyes".

Jonathan Glancey (ed.) *City Futures* (Jonathan Cape: 1997: £20.00 hb, 256pp ill.) — Non-fiction coll. of essays on the shape of 21st century London, from the architects who will actually be building it.

Ian Pearns *An Instance of the Fingerprint* (Jonathan Cape: 1997: £16.99 hb, 608pp) — A murder mystery set in 1660s Oxford, with a cast of scientists, cryptographers, mathematicians, theologians and politicians.

Jon Mitchell *A Memoir* (Chatto & Windus: 1997: £16.99 hb, 252pp) — I know, I know. So you want a science-fiction connection? Her song "Woodstock" includes the line "We are stardust", possibly the first pop culture reference to stellar nuclear synthesis.

Anthony Grafton *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Faber: 1997: £12.99 hb, 176pp) — This intriguing book is... well, a history of the footnote. I wonder if Pratchett gets a mention? If only as a footnote.

Mike Ashley (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of New Sherlock Holmes Adventures* (Raven: 1997: £5.99 pb, 512pp) — Anth. of Holmes-based stories, many new. Contributors include Michael Moorcock, H. R. F. Keating, Basil Copper and many more. Includes a complete Holmes chronology.

★ **Garnder Dozsis** (ed.) *Best New SF 10* (Raven: 1997: £7.99 pb, 608pp) — New edition of the indispensable annual anth., with stories from Benford, Kessel, Kress, McHugh, Park, Reed, Silverberg, Sterling and many others, plus a review of the year, invaluable recommended-reading lists, and excellent introductions. But I do wish they'd sort the numbering out. Recommended.

Stephen Jones (ed.) *The Mammoth Book of Best New Horror* (Raven: 1997: £5.99 pb, 512pp) — New edition of the first-rate horror anth., with stories from Brite, Constantine, Fowler, Iain Sinclair, Michael Marshall Smith, Karl Wagner and others.

WHY DO YOU BUY BOOKS?

(If you don't buy books at all you can switch off at this point. A column about collecting, buying and selling books is not likely to appeal to you.)

For those of you who are still here, we'd like to introduce ourselves. We're Brian Ameringen and Caroline Mullan. We've been reading books for a very long time, buying them for somewhat less time (we had to save up our pocket money first), and selling them for the past few years. We like talking about books too, and we've promised Chris we'll do a bit of that in this column, but more of that anon. Meanwhile, back to the question: why do you buy books?

After all, it's a rather odd thing to do, especially these days, when statistically speaking you're supposed to be working 70-hour weeks, watching tv for 23, and spending the rest of your time asleep. Alternatively of course you are a student or unemployed, in which case you may have time but you don't have any money. Whatever, buying books is still an odd thing to do. We'd be willing to bet that you've had lots of comments about it over the years. You know the kind of thing:

- What a lot of books you've got! Are you a teacher?
- What do you want a book for? You've already got one.
- At least you don't have to worry about the central heating packing up.
- But why buy them when you can get them free from the library?

That last one is actually quite a good question. After all, most of our first books are given or lent to us, by relatives or schools or public libraries, for free. It's a pretty big jump, when you think about it, from reading books people give you to wanting to buy your own. Your own book. For your own reasons. With your own money.

Catchin' the collectin' bug

Brian Ameringen and Caroline Mullan

Caroline doesn't remember buying her first paperback, but she already had a full bookcase — C. S. Lewis, Hugh Walters, Arthur Ransome, E. C. Eliot, etc. — when she was nine. That was the year she does remember: she spent an Aunt's birthday present on L. Frank Baum's *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, published by Dent Dutton, with four colour plates. And it was only a few months later that she brought home Paul Brickhill's biography of Douglas Bader, *Reach For the Sky*, the first hardback she ever bought second-hand with her own money. After that it all got a bit out of hand. That one bookcase grew to two, and three, and more, until by the time she was seventeen she had sixty shelf-feet and a 700-a-year habit. (She has the diaries to prove

Some Definitions

... of terms we will use from time to time:

Accumulator — someone who buys books to read, having not yet acknowledged that you can't read the books you want to. Both of us have been through this.

Rationaliser — someone who has stopped accumulating, but has not yet, and may never, become a collector. Both of us have been through this, too.

Collector — someone who can describe their collection in a sentence. Caroline's is currently "51 by women writers published before 1980"; Brian's is "the books I want to own (at the moment)".

Shelf-feet — the easiest way to estimate how many books you own. Count the number of books which take up one foot of shelving. Measure how many feet of shelves you have books on. Multiply. You need separate measures for hardbacks and paperbacks. We've lost count. Last time we tried, we reckoned we had about 15,000 books in the house.

it.) And that was just the ones she bought! Her Dad still had to drive her to the library sometimes, when the pile of books to be returned reached 40 or 50 high

This was, with hindsight, the Accumulation Phase. This is the phase of life when the books and comics just accumulate on your shelves and you can't get them fast enough. You buy to read; you buy what you want to read; you buy books you've already read so you can have them on your shelves; and ...

... you read what you buy.

Or at least you intend to. At the time. It's insidious, really, the addiction. First you buy in ones and twos, and you read them as you buy them. Then you buy by fours and fives, and polish them off the same week. But then you get to buying by the tens and the dozens: the new books by the authors you know; and the old books by the authors you know; and the books by the new authors you've only just discovered; the books you've been recommended; and the books that look fascinating, and you can't bear not to find out about engineers in ancient Rome or life on a space station or what happened in probability A ... and you know you won't get round to this week's purchases for a while, but there's plenty of time to read — a lifetime to read! — and the book may not be there tomorrow.

But it's all an illusion. That book may not be there tomorrow, but another one will. And the weeks slip away in working and sleeping and watching tv. And a lifetime isn't very long measured against all the books in the world, time perhaps for 20,000 books (if you can manage one a day for fifty years). That won't get you all that far against perhaps 5,000 sf, fantasy and horror titles published in English last year, and all the books published this year, and all the years before and to come.

So eventually you start to cut down on buying books. Intimations of reality intervene at the point of decision, and, yes, you can leave that history of man's relationship with the horse there, on that second-hand bookshop's shelf; it doesn't need to be transferred to yours to sit alongside several hundred other unread books and reproach you all the years it — and they — will remain unread.

And you have made the transition. You are no longer an accumulator of books to be read. Now, when you buy a book, you really mean it, once you've cleared the backlog! Not just that you want to read it, but that you really think you will. Once again a book bought this week gets read this month (mostly). No longer do you acquire the fourth book by the author whose previous three remain unfinished. All those fascinating books that would surprise and educate you if you ever read them remain forever (as far as you are concerned) on the bookshop's shelves because you didn't buy them. And sometimes you even get round to throwing out some of the books, even (whisper it softly!) some of the unread ones.

This stage can last, with lapses, for years, sometimes for a lifetime. Occasionally you still succumb to buying for your very own a copy of a book you read years ago. Sometimes you pick up a book you know you won't read, because it goes so well with others already on your shelves, or because it's rare or valuable, or just for the hell of it ...

But it is still not enough. The bookshops still beckon, the books themselves still tempt, the bookshelves creep inexorably up the walls of your world ...

At this point, like most addicts, you have two choices. Both are bad.

You could give up. You could kill the habit. You could stop buying books. It would be a wrench, but you could do it. People do. We know someone who keeps only one hundred books on his shelves: every time he considers keeping a new one he decides which of his existing hundred must go to give the new book a place. He doesn't buy many books! We also know some people who have given up altogether and gone back to the library. Well, it works for them.

Or, you could become a collector. In a flash your book buying problems are solved. Here is a book you want to buy: will it improve the collection? If the answer is "no", then you do not buy. If the answer is "yes", then you buy it, of course, but — and here is the really clever bit — you don't have to

Continued overleaf



ashep

mailbox



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(marking emails and taxes clearly 'For Matrix')

Letters may be edited. If you don't want your full address
printed please indicate this clearly. Anonymous letters will
be printed at the editor's discretion.

T-Shirt Winner

From **Bernard M. Eap**

21 Moorfield Grove, Tongue Moor, Bolton

This is by way of being an open letter to Yvonne
Rowse. [See Matrix 125, p12.]

The Bolton Group, more properly the BaD group as
there is now a Bolton Media Group as well, read your
convention report and the first collective thought was
to send to our lawyers:

... I imposed myself on a group from Bolton ... They
were a sympathetic lot ...

There goes all the years we have spent building up our
image as a bunch of deviant weirdos, we thought, but
then reconsidered. It wasn't that you caught us on a
good night; the years have mellowed us, and we are
not as we were of yore.

You should have come out with your secret. Two of
the people you talked to have every *Star Trek* video
released, while I am the Secretary of Bolton's Official
Science Fiction and Fantasy Fan Group (yes, I know
we have to come up with a snappier title), and the
aforementioned Media Group. We have always held
the view that no fan should be a stranger to another,
and have never looked askew on fans of any subject as
long as they could express themselves on a level a bit
better than "I love *Trek* therefore I hate BS". And even

—Cont. from previous page
pretend (even to yourself) that you will ever read it! It
deserves its place on your shelves, it truly does: it's a
title you don't have, it's a first edition, it's signed, it's in
better condition — but you are no longer bound to the
wheel: you don't have to read it. And if you have read it
but it doesn't belong to you don't have to keep it! Here
is a book you have just read, but there is no space on
the shelf for it: is it part of the collection? No? Then out
it goes. Here is a book taking up space: does it meet the
criteria? No? Then out it goes. You are saved. Your
collection blesses you when you buy, and again when
you sell. You have rationalised your addiction. You
contemplate your bookshelves with a virtuous glow.
You have good answers to all the stupid questions. You
are saved.

Many book-buyers are readers all their lives. Many
book-buyers achieve collections, whether or not they
retain the habit of reading. Some spouses and children
of book-buyers have collections thrust upon them.
Some of them end up collecting themselves, in
self-defence (which is how Caroline got started). Brian
has gone through collecting and out the other side: he
doesn't even have to resist temptation any more, he can
just buy all the books he wants, and sell them again.

This column will talk about books. It will talk about
buying books, collecting them, and reading them. We
might even talk about selling them if we can find a way
to make it interesting.

See you next Matrix ...

— © Caroline Mullan & Brian Ameringer 1997

someone with that attitude would be asked to define
themselves before being sacrificed on an altar at
midnight (sorry, that was the old days sneaking in).

So, next year come out of that closet you seem to
feel you are in. In the unlikely event you do reveal
yourself to someone who sneers at you for your liking,
then just walk away and find someone else more
tolerant, comforting yourself with the fact that
someone so blinkered to others' views would not be
all that much fun to talk to anyway.

We should all be there and we will be happy to see
you again, just promise not to spread it around what
charming, sympathetic people we really are. ☺

From **Jessica Yates**

88 St Mark's Road, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middx.,
EN1 1BB

I have a bit of info regarding your query of last issue,
p11, on *A Wizard of Earthsea*. I understand it is normal
BBC practice to capitalise on their children's series and
issue them simultaneously on cassette if the book is
sufficiently famous, as has been done with the recent
'Narnia' adaptations. *SFX* 23, March 1997, reviewed
the BBC Radio Collection version of *A Wizard of
Earthsea*. Favourable review, £7.99.

• Thanks for that. After repeated approaches the BBC seems
now to have finally decided to send me advance information,
so I hope I'll be better informed in future.

Jessica has some ideas for possible follow-ups to *Cosgrove
Hall's Wyrd Sisters* and the forthcoming *Soul Music*:

I suggest *Lords and Ladies* as being the sequel to *Wyrd
Sisters* continuing the story of Magrat and the Fool;
and *Moving Pictures* as being a companion piece to
Soul Music with plenty of opportunity for visual gags.
Then what about *Guardians! Guardians! and Men at
Arms* as a two-partter? ☺

From **Jennifer Swift**

43 Percy Street, Oxford, OX4 3AA

Now that the BSFA is embarking on a new publicity
and promotions drive, I thought I would write to
suggest one inexpensive but effective way we might
recruit new members (and perhaps win back some of
the lapsed). I understand that campaigning
organisations such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace
and the World Development Movement have found
that the most cost-efficient way to win new supporters
is through displaying attractive membership leaflets in
dispensers placed in appropriate sites, such as
wholefood shops and vegetarian cafés. Why couldn't
the BSFA produce its own promotional leaflet and
dispenser, and ask existing members to place them in
bookshops, libraries and other suitable locations? Also,
single leaflets could be sent out to all members
once a year, with the suggestion that they pass it on to
someone who shares their interest in sf. I think that
now would be an especially appropriate time to
conduct a membership drive since *Matrix* and the
other BSFA publications (which are the only link that
every member has with the Association) have got so
much better in the past few years. ☺

• Thanks for the kind comment on the magazines. We do in
fact have a leaflet available, which is being reprinted now
that the contact addresses have stabilised. There's also a
committee meeting in July, at which publicity and
recruitment will be the main focus of attention; I hope
there'll be a report on this in the next *Matrix*. The BSFA
web site now being developed will, we hope, generate some
members for little outlay. Meanwhile, any other suggestions
and ideas are welcome!

I understand there's a problem with placing leaflets in
libraries, as they mustn't be solely advertisements — there
has to be an educational element in the literature.

From **Philip Muldowney**

15 Woodmill Lane, Bitterne Park, Southampton,
SO18 2PA

Defending publishers indeed! We certainly live in a
publishing era that is different, that is inevitable. How-
ever, the change from what was almost a cottage indus-
try to just another minor division of some superlati-
on conglomerate ... is that necessarily a good thing?
The accountant rules without doubt. So money goes
on the higher roller, on the airport blockbusters that
bring in the shekels. The consequence of a great deal
more for the few mega-novels means the rest of the
jam being spread thinly if at all. I have no idea what
the present rate of remuneration is for first novels or
indeed midlist (if that is going to survive), but I bet it
is not a healthy one.

I would query your cut-off date of 1970. There was
a lot of sf published in the 1960s: given the 'library'
markets, like Robert Hale and Dennis Dobson, there
was a relatively large market for run-of-the-mill sf.
Crap a lot of it might well have been, but it provided a
market for aspiring sf writers. [It's been argued that *spin-
offery* now fulfils this function. — Chris] Similarly in the
States, while publishers like Ace and DAW did pub-
lish a lot of poor stuff, they provided opportunities for
a lot of authors — Delany, Le Guin, Dick, Spinrad,
Zelazny to name but a few. Those markets are no
longer there, fact, but that necessarily a good thing?
Perhaps 1960 would have been a better marker. More
sf being published? In doing a very arbitrary survey of
the books listed in *Matrix* 125, ignoring non-fiction and
lumping horror in with fantasy, I come up with a figure
of 67 fantasy books and 40 sf books. The position is
even more interesting in that of the 40, five at least are
spinoffery, and a couple more sharcroppers. Plus
about five reprints, a couple of anthologies, a couple of
short story collections, and several young adult books,
and one is down to about 20 adult sf novels of interest.
Of those, what are good quality? Which without
reading them is impossible to say, on the other hand,
less than 20% coming out as adult sf novels, and those
catering for the wide range of tastes within sf readers
themselves? That is a precisely small number. OK, it
is a snapshot, but it is over a two-three month period,
so it must have some relevance. Also, from a glance at
the Waterstone's bookshelves, it is only too dismally
accurate. [You could probably double those figures, though
the proportions are about right. — Chris]

On the other hand, I would certainly agree that we
probably have the finest group of British writers
working within the field that we have ever had.
Arthur Clarke, Stephen Baxter, Paul McAuley, Nicola
Griffith, Peter Hamilton, Ian McDonald, Ian Banks,
Ken MacLeod, Brian Stableford, Ian Watson, Brian
Aldiss, Ian MacLeod, plus innumerable adjacent
writers: Christopher Priest, Mary Gentle, Kim
Newman, Robert Holdstock, Terry Pratchett, Garry
Kilworth, Jonathan Carroll, Ramsey Campbell etc. etc.
[Carroll is a US citizen based in Vienna; he artfully mingles
a European sensibility with US myths. And vice versa. —
Chris] It is a long list of authors who produce
top-quality interesting work, and that is just off the top
of one's head when sitting at a word processor! So
perhaps the situation is not too bleak. On the other
hand, how many first novels are there in this issue's
book listings? Not many.

It is sad to see the death of Sam Moskowitz. Slightly
cranky some of his critical writings might have been,
but he seems to have been around forever. All those
New York Futurians were not more than kids really:
Moskowitz 19, chairing the first Worldcon, Phil 20,
Asimov 19. Those were the days. Or were they?

The very widespread distribution and heavy stocking of the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* is a very strong indicator of which way the publishers think the market is going. At £50 (amazing how that £5 increase on the pre-publication price just happened to slip by), still a considerable price for a book, even the small independent bookshops had quite a few copies. The majors, like Waterstone's, had it piled up in specifically supplied wire stands, in front-of-store prime selling space. This is big bestseller territory, and the print run for the FE must have been considerable indeed. It is interesting to compare this with the promotion that the companion *Encyclopedia of SF* got in 1993, which was very low-key indeed. Not many of the branches of Dillon's and Waterstone's even stocked it. I can remember seeking my copy out in an independent bookstore, buying the single copy they had, and hearing the buyer congratulate herself on selling it, as she had had great doubts that such an obscure title would sell at all. Fantasy conquers the marketplace.

So what is the overall impression of it, then? An awesome job, but I suppose one's opinion of it has to be a personal one. I found a copy of *The Hands of Orlac* by Maurice Renard in a second-hand bookshop (where else?), the basis of several films, and translated from the French and published in 1981. I eagerly turned to the FE only to find that they did not list the book – only the film! [Renard has substantial entries in both the SFE and SF. The Illustrated Encyclopedia. John Clute clearly regards him as an sf writer. Though we can perhaps ask why the various films have entries in both the FE and SFE (under inconsistent headings). — Chris] I personally like the rather arbitrary treatment of horror. Is not horror a branch of fantasy? [Not according to Clute it isn't. — Chris] The haphazard nature of the treatment of horror writers is somewhat out of place. Stephen King and Dean Koonitz and even Kim Newman are in, while Richard Layman and Shaun Hutson are not. Both Robert Bloch and August Derleth get substantially more treatment in the SFE than in the FE. Surely both were more Dark Fantasy writers than sf writers? If you are going to include part of a genre, then why not all?

But these are only minor carpings, which can go on until the cows come home. They really must depend on what your definition of fantasy is. It is a truly fascinating book, and a great achievement.

[Philip then mentioned the *lain Banks Guardian piece* – see elsewhere – and asked:]

Why is it that sf fans and conventions get such lousy and contemptuous treatment from the media? The Scottish Worldcon fared little better, with its

treatment from Channel 4 and sensationalistic headlines in the *Mirror*. Are we such easy targets? ☒

• Yes – the function of the popular media is to reinforce stereotypes. Anybody else have thoughts on the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*?

And now it's time for me to grovel . . .

From **Arthur C. Clarke**
Colombo, Sri Lanka

I'd like to correct your note about me in issue 125, May/June 1997 *Matrix*. The title of the St Martin's book actually reads: *Carbon-Based Bipeds!* (not the feeble version given).

More importantly, it's not an autobiography, but a collection of my best non-fiction over the last 70 (gulp!) years.

If I ever do an autobiography, which is very unlikely, it will be published in 2017 – title: *Modest Genius or I Was A Teenage Centurian*. ☒

From **Mark Plummer**

14 Northway Road, Croydon, Surrey, CR0 6JE
Another fine issue of *Matrix* with good Easterncon coverage and an excellent profile piece by Elizabeth Billinger.

But will Dave Langford ever forgive you for that photo on page 6? ☒

• Let's see.

From **Dave Langford**

94 London Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AU
Matrix 125 arrived this morning. Oh dear. That picture. I think I may invest in an iron mask for use when you're around.

Page 4, Hugos: "... the only non-US writer represented is Ulsterman James White." What about Canadian Robert J. Sawyer?

Page 4, Snippings: Corliss is not the same as Tipp-Ex. It's for use on duplicator stencils, generally smells like nail varnish, and is traditionally coloured lurid pink or blue so as to be highly visible (to facilitate retyping) rather than blend in. Some older UK fans have known that call it obitertene – a trade name, I think – but corliss was understood worldwide. O tempora, O mores. ☒

• The editor blamed the subeditor for *That Picture*, who glared at the photographer, who, lacking a cat, kicked a Swiss Cheese plant and muttered "Bloody camera". The camera was unavailable for comment.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM Elizabeth Billinger, Ellen Chesire, Syd Foster, Steve Jeffery, and Steve Palmer. Thanks to one and all! — Chris

BSFA AWARDS

Send awards nominations to

Chris Hill

Room 3 Cottage, 3 Lynch Hill,
Whitchurch, Hants., RG28 7ND
Email c_hill@compuserve.com

My article in the last issue of *Matrix* seems to have caused a little confusion over the eligibility of various works, particularly for the artwork award. As a result I have checked the BSFA committee minutes from prior to my taking over the awards administration. The correct criteria of eligibility are as follows:

- **Best Novel** – Sffantasy first published in the UK in the previous calendar year (i.e. for the award presented in 1998, books published in 1997).
- **Best Short Fiction** – Sffm from a magazine with a cover date in the previous calendar year, or first appearance in the UK in an anthology/collection published in the previous calendar year.
- **Best Artwork** – First appearance in the UK in the previous calendar year.

I hope that this clears up any confusion that I may have inadvertently caused. As always, if you are not sure whether a particular piece of work qualifies, please send me the details anyway and I will check.

As an additional aid to the nomination process, starting with the current issue of *Vector* (194) all books reviewed there which are eligible for the awards will be marked as such. Occasionally stores receive their first publication in single-author collections, as well as anthologies and magazines. For example, Colin Greenland's recent collection *The Plenty Principle* contains two or three stories which could be nominated. So again any collections which contain eligible short stories will be marked.

— Chris Hill

Nominations received:

Novel

Brian Stablerford *Chimera's Cradle* (Legend: £16.99 hb)

Tricia Sullivan *Someone to Watch Over Me* (Orion: £16.99 hb)

Jack Womack *Let's Put the Future Behind Us* (Flamingo: £8.99 pb)

Short Story

Eugene Byrne "Thimmo" (Interzone 120)

Martin Simpson "Dancing About Architecture" (The Third Alternative 11)

Lisa Tuttle "Soul Song" (Interzone 119)

Artwork

Brian Froud Cover of *The Wood Wife* by Terri Windling (Legend: £5.99 pb)

points arising

• It was one of those brain-stopping moments. We were in the pub, and the subject of H. P. Lovecraft rose from the eldritch depths of our beer-glasses. "Yes, the kuh-thu... er, serthloo... oh... how the hell do you pronounce it?" One of those words you only ever see printed. Chitlouse! Help!

• **PUBLICISE AND BE DAMNED** Ever since Jeff Noon came on to the scene, there's been an increasing tendency to publicise certain authors as 'cult' writers, dripping with hipness and pop-cult itness, and promoted in such zines as *Loaded*, *Wired* (as was), *The Face*. At Easterncon, Michael Marshall Smith's *Sparrows* was being pushed with an in-yr-face poster prominently featuring the word 'tuck'. Other ads are more restrained, with tag-lines like 'No you don't have to buy the new Michael Marshall Smith novel. You don't have to buy the new Oasis album either' (associating it with the hippest band around, at least in the minds of copywriters) and 'The literary equivalent of a 4-3 victory in extra time, after being 3 down with 3 seconds off...' (football, the hippest game around. Well, it was last year). A quote from Mark Thomas is used to blurb Paul McAuley's forthcoming *Child of the River*

(Gollancz, Sep): 'McAuley is part of a spearhead of writers who, for pure imagination, vision and fun have taken Britain the Memphis Sun Records of sf.' There's the subliminal promotion given to *Grimwood's* neo-Adrian, emphasising word-of-mouth, similarly with *O's* *Dead Meat*. I suspect we're going to see a lot more of this, especially after the Waterstone's books-of-the-century poll showed how often people are prepared to read fantasy and sf so long as it isn't labelled as such. We're being marginalised. Again.

• There's a gleefully vindictive gremlin which is particularly attracted to corrections and errata, and did it have some fun with *Matrix* 124. It's Jenny Wolmark, not Woolmark. Woolmark, Woolmark or any other variation. And *Mawth* Glas means both *Blue Mars* and *Green Mars*, not *Red Mars* and *Green Mars*.

• The June BSFA London Meeting was on the 25th, not the 24th; apologies for this type. These meetings are always on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except in December for obvious reasons. See 'Events' for further details.

• Kasparov's chess match against Deep Blue was a six games long, not five as reported in *Matrix* 125. The final score was 3½ / 2½ to Deep Blue.

• I neglected to print the full shortlists for the 1996 BSFA Awards last issue. For the record, they were:

NOVEL: Gill Alderman *The Memory Palace*; Iain M. Banks (winner) *Excession*; Stephen Bury *Interface*; Ken MacLeod *The Stone Carver*; Kim Stanley Robinson *Blue Mars*; Bruce Sterling *Isle of Fire*.

SHORT FICTION: J. G. Ballard *The Dying Fall* (Interzone 108); Barrington J. Bayley (winner) *'A Crab Must Try'* (Interzone 103); Molly Brown *'Community Service'* (Interzone 107); M. John Harrison *'The East'* (Interzone 114); Mary Turville *'Eat or Be Eaten: A Love Story'* (Interzone 104).

ORIGINAL ARTWORK: Jim Burns (winner) Cover for Jack McDevitt's *Ancient Shores*; Fred Gambino Cover for Interzone 103; Santos Garrio Cover for Interzone 104; David Hardy Cover for Interzone 107; Dave McKean Cover for Sandman: *Book of Dreams*; SMS Cover for Interzone 112.

— Chris Terran

the 1997 bsfa membership survey

maureen
speller

SOMETHING LIKE 20% of the BSFA's membership replied to our survey, our first since 1989. This is a tremendous response, the kind of thing marketing firms only dream about. Thank you very much to everyone who took the time and trouble to fill in the form. And thank you also to **Claire Brialley** for taking on the gargantuan task of compiling the survey and collating the results. It's been a long process but the results are worth the trouble involved.

Now, what are you telling us about the running of the BSFA? Various other committee members will be discussing the results as they affect their particular areas, but it falls to me to talk about the organisation in general.

First of all, we know that you are, in the main, long-term readers of *sf* yet most of you don't belong to any other *sf*-related organisation. That means we have a great responsibility to act as a primary source of contact, of news and information. Certainly, that's how I see it, and the majority of you agree (see question 18 results overleaf). I am delighted that 88% think we do a good job in providing information but in general, the approval ratings for our other rôles are quite a bit lower, so there is obviously room for improvement. On the other hand, I am very encouraged to find that 92% of you consider the BSFA to be good value for money, and from your comments, there is a general appreciation of the improvements we've made recently. We're all keen to build on those improvements, and that means making sure our approval rating goes up next time.

One of the things that has been noticeable in the past is that the number of people actively involved in the BSFA has been a very small percentage of the membership, so one of the most heartening things from my point of view has been the number of you who said you would like to be involved in future. From contributing to magazines to helping out at conventions to voting in the Awards, every category saw a healthy increase in interest. We need to think very seriously about the best ways we can use your offers of help, and we'll certainly be taking into consideration the very positive comments about what would encourage respondents to become more involved. The more active the membership, the better the BSFA is for all of us, so this could well be a very healthy result indeed.

It is inevitable that whenever you do something like this, you spot things you'd like to do better next time. Looking over the results it's easy to say: we could have been more specific in this or that question, or we should have asked about such-and-such. Certainly, this survey has been so productive and so useful, I am sure we'll be repeating it at more regular intervals (though not always on such a massive scale).

There is one clear message that I get from these results. There are things we could do better - of course there are, and your comments have been a great help in identifying areas for improvement - but most of you seem to think we are on the right track. That is something it is always good to know.

— Maureen Kincaid Speller, BSFA Administrator

survey design and data entry: **claire brialley**
text: **claire brialley · andrew m butler**
gary dalkin · carol ann kerry green
paul hood · maureen kincaid speller

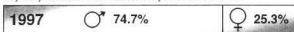
uncredited text, graphics & report design: **chris terran**

Who are you? You're likely to be male (though a lot less likely than you were in 1989), married, thirty-something, and earning about £25,000 a year. You're probably employed in a technical profession, and you own your own home. But there's a substantial number of you either unwaged or on low earnings, and - most strikingly - the number of female members has risen sharply since the last survey, in 1989. Then there was a 6:1 ratio of male:female members, now it's 3:1.

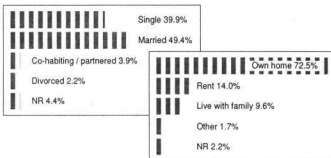
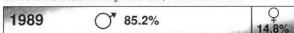
**you
and
yours**

Sex & Marriage

Of the 178 of you who responded, 133 were male and 45 female. Curiously, this is very nearly the same ratio as for the authors you want to read about.



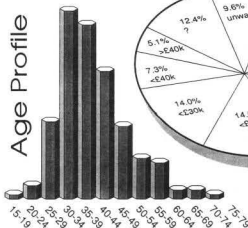
There's been a substantial change since 1989, which looked like this:



Average age: 38.8

The 89 survey found an average age in the early thirties.

Age Profile



I SAID IT BEFORE but I'll say it again: thank you very much to all those who responded to the BSFA Membership Survey. We had 178 responses, and it should be extremely useful for us in planning what we need to do over the next few years.

It doesn't have to stop here, of course; in fact we hope it won't. If there's anything you want to give us feedback on, anything you'd love us to do which we're not doing at the moment, anything you want to let off steam about or any relevant questions you'd like answered, do get in touch; the vast majority of survey respondents said that they liked letters in the magazines to some degree, and *someone's* got to write them... and it does help us to provide the sort of service you want if you tell us some more about what you have in mind! However, this is an excellent place to start, both for us to analyse and act for and for any of you who feel like it to react and comment.

I should also point out that we have noticed the cluster of comments which suggested that some more of you might want to get involved with BSFA activities if you got a response or some personal contact from us (see Q22). In that vein, thanks to all of you who sent letters with your survey forms; I know it's been months, but we haven't forgotten you. We promise to write too.

And now on to the really important bits....

— Claire Brialley, Publicity & Promotions

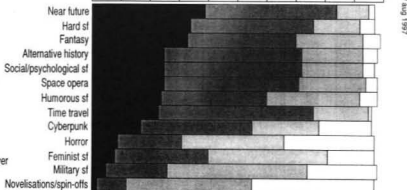
**claire
brialley**

Q 14. What types of sf do you read?

An "Other" category was included, which generated: slipstream 3, children's/YA of 3; magic realism 2; comics and graphic novels 2; magazines; literary sf; steampunk; surrealist/speculative; end of world ("cosy catastrophe"); mystical/esoteric; Arthurian; prehistoric fantasy; dark fantasy/occult; adventure; crime/detective sf; 18th/19th century sf; gay sf; "background" [whatever that means]; and "everything else (except slash fiction)". "Slash" is fan-written fiction based on (often homosexual) doings between various media sf stars, canonically Kirk/Spock - hence "slash".

Oh, and one modest person wrote "My own".

Often Sometimes Rarely Never



Q 12. Does sf/fantasy form the major part of your reading for pleasure?

YES 83.7% NO 16.3%

Other major preferences include: history (fiction and non-fiction) 7; non-fiction 6; crime 4; variety of mainstream fiction 4; biography 3; slipstream 2; environmental non-fiction / alternative economics; newspapers / magazines; sf fanzines.

Q 17. Which other sf/fantasy related organisations do you belong to?

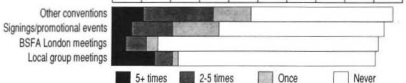
66.3% of you don't belong to any other organisations. Of the rest, answers included: British Fantasy Society 15; Friends of Foundation 8; local sf groups 7 (that is assuredly beyond the real life - many groups are insufficiently formal to count as 'organisations'); Z29 Plural Z Alpha 6; Octarine 2; SFFWA 2; Tolkien Society 2; H. G. Wells Society 2; vampire societies 2; ORCA 2; sf/fantasy book clubs 2; Fans Across the World; NESFA; Bram Stoker Society; Wilkie Collins Society; Gothic Society; Arthur C. Clarke Internet Club; Pendragon; MENSA sf group; Jomsborg in Exile; SF Club of South Africa; various media-related fan clubs; and various Amateur Publishing Associations. We also have a member of SCUM, the Society for Cutting Up Men; your editor trembles, but at least his name isn't 'Andy'.

Q 20. Which of the following events have you attended in the last two years?

• Intersection (the 1995 Worldcon):

YES 29.8% NO 70.2%

• Others:

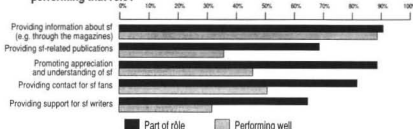


Half of you haven't been to a convention in the last couple of years... but half have. Local sf group meetings attended included Bolton, Bradford, Brighton, Bristol, Colchester, Croydon, Dundee, Hull, London 'Tun', Manchester, Peterborough, Preston, Reading, State of Texas, Swansea, Warrington, York and Z29 (the Hitch-hikers' Guide fan club).

Q 16. How long have you been a member of the BSFA?



Q 18. What do you think the BSFA's rôle is, and how well do you think it is performing that rôle?



Q 15. How long have you been a regular sf reader?

Perhaps a badly phrased question, as 93.8% of you answered "longer than 10 years", clearly you all became addicts in childhood. Other figures were: 0-2 years 2.2%, 3-5 years 1.1%, 6-10 years 2.2%, and one NR. This may be telling us something about the BSFA: we are not reaching new readers. Alternatively, perhaps if you don't encounter sf at the Golden Age (usually defined as 14) you're unlikely to start reading it as an adult.

Q 27. Which other sf magazines (if any) do you read?

Interzone (83) • SFX (31) • Foundation (26) • Locus (21) • Asimov's, F&SF (16) • Analog (15) • Starburst (14) • Critical Wave (12) • SF Chronicle (10) • BBR (7) • TV Zone (6) • SF Eye (5) • The Third Alternative (5) • Scheherazade, small press zines (4) • Dreamwatch, New York Review of SF, Zene (3) • Cult Times, Infinity, Omni (online), SF Age, Starlog, The Edge Threads, Xenos, various sf tv magazines (2) • Old issues of Galaxy, Fortean Times, Studies in Weird Fiction, Dreamscape, Realms of Fantasy, Fangoria, Yellow Submarine, Necrofile, Dark Side, Samhain, Dreams From the Stranger's Cave, Shivers, Aboriginal SF, IASHM, Xpoxe, Cinescape, Orion, Arcane, Star Trek zines, Star Wars zines, Ansible, French fanzines, Club magazines, US sf magazines (1).

Nearly half of you - 46.6% - read Interzone, and 17.4% read SFX. Foundation, the UK's premier academic sf journal, has a surprisingly healthy readership, and the big three US fiction magazines continue to have UK readers. There's a good assortment of small-press titles, led by BBR, Scheherazade and The Third Alternative. Discounting SFX, Starburst is easily the most popular media-related title. Finally, Ansible has only one reader, apparently. Well, everybody I know in the BSFA reads it, if only for name-checks! I imagine that most people don't think of it as a magazine. — Chris

Q 23. Do you think the BSFA is good value for money?

YES 92.1% NO 7.9%

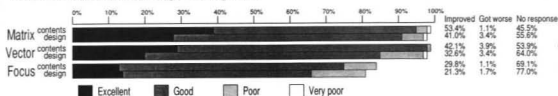
• If no, why?

Should use the merchandise to subsidise the magazines and bring the price down. • It's trying to be all things to all people; should pick one half of the literary/media and consumerist splits, and stick to it. And then be prepared for people to be dissatisfied anyway! • All I get out of it at the moment is forewarning of publication of my favourite authors. • No fault of its own; just too few people in the organisation to make it economic. • Publications are often too late for up-to-date news and reviews, and competition deadlines are often past by the time the magazines arrive. (2) • Many of the reviews are ill-informed [no criticism intended of editors] and I'm not a writer. • It's rather expensive for overseas rates, but I want to carry on getting the mailings. • It's getting a bit pricey. • Undecided really.

• Any other comments?

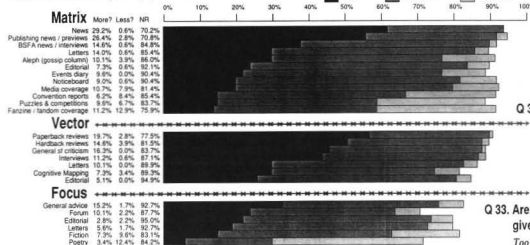
It's very good VFM, in fact. • It's good VFM now, but it probably hasn't been for the past couple of years due to the erratic schedule, size and quality of mailings. • In 1995/96 it definitely wasn't VFM; this year it's much better, so far at least. • Wouldn't have said it was VFM three years ago, but there have been a lot of improvements. • It's good value now that the magazines arrive more regularly and I feel more in touch. • This assumes regular mailings. (2) • Publications are more regular than the British Fantasy Society! • The latest issue was great, but the other stuff is looking a tad moribund.

Q 28/29. What do think of the magazines in general?



you
and the
magazines

Q 30. How much do you enjoy these features in the magazines?



Q 32. Do you like illustrations in the magazines?

Matrix... 51.1%
Vector... 47.2%
Focus... 35.4%
15.2% wanted more illustrations, 10.7% wanted fewer, and 41.0% wanted better quality.

Q 34. Would you like biographies or bibliographies appended to articles in Vector?

Yes No Don't care
Biographies... 41.0% 31.5% 18.5%
Bibliographies... 65.2% 7.9% 18.5%

Q 33. Are you content with the coverage given to writers in Focus?

Too much... 1.7%
About right... 58.4%
Too little... 12.4%

Q 31. If you actively dislike any features, why is this?

Here's a selection of comments:

Matrix... Editorial - Can't stand the crawling apologies it usually contains. Media - Have no interest as can't afford a tv or the cinema. Not in any way a media fan. Do Hollywood/Yankee tv products really need any boosting from you guys? Media coverage is best left to SFX etc. Not really interested - but no reason media coverage shouldn't remain provided the book coverage remains high. Doesn't interest me. Have no tv - but coverage should remain for those who have. Can Reports - They're usually written by people in the know. Tend to be very similar. Fanzine reviews / fandom coverage - Fanzine reviews are boring unless I'm in the fanzine. Not into the concept of corporate fandom. Because fandom etc is self-satisfied and anal. Alleg - Don't like the style. Comes across as too cliché when we really want to give the opposite impression. Readings - Would like enough time to do them. Still can't do them after 50 years of competing st!

Vector... General - Dislike endless discussion on one or two authors eg. Le Guin. Also no need for 'Book of the Year'; one review is enough. Features shouldn't become too

'learned' - save it for Foundation! Editorial - Can sometimes be overly contentious. Book reviews - Sometimes waste a lot of space reviewing bad fantasy novels. Do people who like it really need very cruddy Celtic trilogy reviews? Just too many book reviews. Reviews are too overly political; reviewers should be able to read and appreciate different views. Reviews are personal things and they bore me to death.

Focus... General - A pure irrational prejudice against fan fiction. Plenty of magazines already publishing fiction and poetry. Focus should concentrate on articles etc. No inclined to write st, so not interested. Poetry - Can't stand poetry. It doesn't rhyme. Although I like poetry, I've yet to find any decent st poetry. The st in Focus is particularly poor.

Overall... Generally find the magazines too stuffy and anarchy. Nowhere near enough coverage of horror. Incest: you write about each other a lot, and anyone who doesn't know you may not be that interested. It's sometimes difficult to like something so remote - Imagination or spatial gaps. The letters are incomprehensible unless you are already familiar with everyone's nicknames, backgrounds and opinions. Too many insider attitudes.

Q 38. What other features would you like to see in the magazines?

General... Pictures (especially photos). (2) Better proof-reading. (2) ISBN numbers with book reviews. A rating scale for reviews of books, films etc. Reference material, including indexes. Biographies/bibliographies for specific authors as magazine supplements. Return of the cryptic crossword.

Photos are now a regular feature of Matrix, and the crossword is back. Proof-reading has, I think, improved. We'd think about ISBN numbers. Personally I don't really like 'star-rating' systems, but you never know! See elsewhere this issue for information on BSFA indexes - Chris

Sound & Fury... A bit of debate. More letters/debate. More discussion/interchange. More short, lively pieces. More provocative opinion. KTF reviewing. Furious manifestos. Even more cruel dismissal of Yankee genre horrors. Raging against the endless Discworld clone and fantasy rubbish invading our bookshelves.

Letters and debate... well, the ball's in your court on that one. Short and lively pieces - this is a good point. - Chris

The BSFA... A big blip for the BSFA's 40th anniversary - what if has become in 40 years plus the BSFA's role in it. BSFA Award winners. BSFA members' profile section. A bit more on Orbit.

Anniversary plans are under way. BSFA Award winners are the subject of a series in Vector, and keep your eye on Matrix early next year. More on Orbit soon. - Chris

LitCrit... More articles of a critical nature which analyse books in a way which addresses the view that fantasy and sf are, per se, junk. More critical analysis / commentary. (3) Themes of intertextuality in st, reworkings of other literature etc. Analysis/reviews of (a) specific subject matters (comparisons of vision etc.) (b) specific authors' bodies of work. Critical appraisal of authors. Authors and the background to their books. Articles on specific categories of st, such as those listed in Q14. (Recommended reading in such areas would also be useful.) Comment on French st. More European coverage. More on short stories. More about fantasy. A regular horror column.

SF And... St and music. More para-st (sfnal views on life, politics etc., not just fiction). More on the real content of st stories, treating the setting in its own right and not just as a commentary on the 'real' world. Series of articles relating mythology and st/f novels. More discussion of the philosophy/spirituality in st/f. Hard scientific predictions related to st/f, and how it is anticipating technological developments.

History... A '100 Years Ago' feature at the beginning of each year. Retrospective features on st classics of the 60s, 70s and 80s. A 'Forgotten Classics' feature. (2) 'A Where Are They Now?' feature on authors from the 50s and 60s who have dropped out of st-dom. A history of space opera. A history of time travel.

Fans & Fandom... History of sf/fantasy fandom. Pulp magazine. More fanzine reviews. Information on film, including film history in the 'Recent & Forthcoming' section, and reviews of film books.

Media... Articles/column on recent developments on the Internet. Reviews of st-related Web pages. (5) More about films. Features on radio and animation. Multimedia reviews (but not too often). Reviews of radio sf/fantasy. Reviews of st games (computer and other). Regular feature on Babylon 5. St themes and treatments by different media (e.g. time travel, cyberspace).

Information about the net was easily the most requested item. The BSFA's web site will soon be online, and look out for related articles. Radio coverage has been increased. There's something on games in the pipeline. - Chris

Books, Zines & Publishing... Articles on rare and collectable st books. Features on interesting specialist bookshops. Information on where to get American foreign st. Reviews of out-of-print books for those who use second-hand bookshops. Contacts for second-hand mail-order dealers. Articles on publishers. (2) Article on how the publishing world works. How new authors broke into the business, how they write etc. Some quizzing of publishers on book prices and paper quality. Interviews/features about editors, publishers, small press editors/magazines etc. (2) Small magazine reviews. (2) More market information. Brian Ameringer and Caroline Mullan's new column should address some of these requests. I hope to have a feature on st editors soon. We have enough trouble keeping up with current st, let alone out-of-print stuff! - Chris

Andrew M. Butler on *Vector*

THE GENERAL RESPONSE seems to be that people like *Vector* and that we're doing a reasonable job: 97.2% of the sample read the magazine, and only 0.6% thought its contents poor. On the design front opinion is more spread but positive: 19.7% excellent, 64.6% good, 11.8% poor and 0.6% very poor. 47.2% of you like illustrations in *Vector*. This is something we will have to consider for future issues, although at the moment we are pushed for space.

What and of the content? Paperback reviews are the most popular feature, narrowly beating hardback reviews (combining the 'a lot' and 'quite a lot' percentages put them more or less even, with paperbacks just ahead). Indeed, a fifth of you want more reviews coverage, although the vast majority didn't respond to the question. Reviews did generate some comments: "Just too many book reviews", "Too many pages of reviews" and "they bore me to death" (not literally, we hope). This issue has already arisen in the letter column of *Vector* 193 and we were already planning changes. That about 85% of you don't read wookieebooks more than occasionally suggests one area to cut down. Wasting space on "cruddy Celtic trilogies" was also a bone of contention, although about a third of you often read fantasy.

The least popular feature was 'Cognitive Mapping', but this will be continued as we feel it is an important feature and we do get a lot of positive word-of-mouth. In fact, apart from the 3.9% who don't enjoy the editorials ("Can sometimes be overly contentious") and the letters, no more than a handful of you actively dislike items in the options we gave you. Eighteen of you want more letters: write one a year each and that's three letters in each mailing. You know where we are.

A few general responses merit comment. One person ('Urslake') discussion on one or two authors which keeps going over the years, e.g., Ursula Le Guin". Beyond reviews, I can't find any discussion of Le Guin, although the criticism is certainly true of the academic journals. Which we were warned against becoming: "Features shouldn't become too 'learned' - save it for *Foundation*!" Well, we are a 'critical journal' but there have been two or three articles which in retrospect we should have

andrew m
butler

edited with the general sf reader in mind. At the same time, we hope to publish a variety of styles and expertise. Another respondent claims that there is no need for "Book of the Year" features: one review is enough". At the same time it allows a consensus to develop between reviewers, or a second bite at the cherry - I'm sure books which the original reviewers have damned must have appeared in the top ten list. It also gives the one opportunity of the year to look beyond the sf, fantasy and horror genres to recommend reading for those 16.3% of you whose major preference in reading is not those genres, and to widen all our reading.

We'll be using the 'types of sf read' question to mould the balance of *Vector*'s features alongside the list of authors which respondents would like to see articles on. Conflating the reading-genre figures for 'often' and 'sometimes', the most popular is near-future sf (83.8%), followed by hard sf (76.4%), time travel (75.9%), alternative history (72.5%), social / psychological sf (71.9%) and space opera (70.7%). Hot on the heels of this is fantasy with 69.1%, something which we have been criticised before for neglecting. Obviously we encourage submissions of articles on these genres, plus on Banks, Cherry, Egan, Le Guin (sorry!), Simmons, Hambly, MacLeod, McDonald, Pratchett, Vance and Wolfe, to name the most requested authors. Since the survey was carried out, we have had articles on Banks (the most popular name), Simmons and MacLeod. We hope to have some coverage of Ken MacLeod very soon. On the other hand, we'll have to watch that we don't have too much coverage of novelisations and spin-offs (84.8% rarely or never read them), military sf (70.1%), and horror (66.3%).

In conclusion, whilst there is obviously scope for improvement, we will be building upon a broadly successful base. We now have a better idea of our readership and their tastes. We will be writing to those 42 people who have offered to write critical features: if each contributes a page and a half to *Vector* each year then we can keep going. Paul Kincaid will be in contact with potential reviewers when vacancies arise. And until the next survey, we look forward to hearing your comments on and off the record.

— Andrew M. Butler, *Vector* Joint Features Editor

Carol Ann Kerry Green on *Focus*

IT IS ALWAYS interesting to see the results of a BSFA survey. Do people really enjoy what we're doing? Are we getting it right? What more/less should we be doing? So it was with some trepidation that I studied the results this time around.

Of the people who responded, 73% stated that they read *Focus*. This was quite a relief, and it's nice to know that we are being read. The features in the magazine that you most enjoyed were "Forum" and "General Advice", with the letters section following on behind. Poetry came at the bottom, but with fiction the numbers were more evenly split. It was also nice to see so many people enjoying our editorials.

When asked if you wanted more of each feature, the majority of you opted for more "General Advice", followed by more "Forum". But in general, you would like to see more of the same. As regards fiction, it seems we've probably got the balance about right, despite comments in the "actively dislike" section stating that 'Fiction/poetry doesn't belong in *Focus*', and 'Fiction should only be published as a critical exercise: there are plenty of other places to submit both good and bad fiction'.

Ten of you said that you would like to see more letters in *Focus*, a wish shared by the editors. It seems that although most people enjoy reading letters columns, few enjoy contributing to them, given the paucity of mail received here in recent months.

Again in the "actively dislike" section, there were a couple of comments to the effect that *Focus* has seen its day. *Focus* is no longer worthwhile, and should be discontinued. The world has moved on since it was established in the late 70s; sf is part of popular culture, and nurturing new writers is best done by the small press. *You publish first humples!*, and 'Not interested in either amateur writers or aspiring professionals. *Focus* is the most dispensable of the BSFA's output'. Ouch. As an editor here, I have to remember that this isn't personal and is only two views out of the 178 responses.

The question about whether you are content with the coverage given to writers in *Focus* came up with three people who thought there was too much, 104 who thought we have it about right, and 22 who thought there was too little, with 49 not replying. I must admit to being very intrigued as to why three of you think a magazine dedicated to writers and writing is giving too much coverage to writers. Comments, anyone?

It was very encouraging to see that 114 people would be willing to contribute to magazines as a whole and that 33 were interested in contributing fiction and poetry with 9 interested in contributing artwork, and 42 critical features, 46 general articles. I'm sure all the editors will be in touch with individuals about this in the near future - if indeed they haven't already done so.

Overall, I was impressed by the results of the survey, and pleased that you are in the main content with *Focus* as it is.

— Carol Ann Kerry Green, *Focus* Joint Editor

carol ann
kerry
green

Chris Terran on *Matrix*

THE NATURE of *Matrix* as a news magazine and a grab-bag of subjects not covered in the other publications means that there are bound to be parts of the mix that don't appeal to each individual reader. This is reflected in the number of people who don't enjoy certain aspects of the magazine at all (see Q30). However, I think that the high overall rating for *Matrix* as a whole (Q28, Q29) shows that I'm performing my balancing act reasonably well.

The most popular features, unsurprisingly, are news and publishing information. But looking at the more/less breakdown - they have by far the highest 'more' ratings - it's clear that I'm not providing enough. I'll be making efforts to fix this.

Coverage of fandom has always been contentious. It's the least popular part of the magazine, and although I'm aware that I've reduced the coverage in recent times, this process won't continue any further; there'll still be fan-related news, fanzine reviews and convention reports (though I'll be attempting to address the specific criticisms of these - "tend to be very similar" and "written by people who know the rules"). The BSFA was born of fandom and is supported by it, and remember that fandom is simply the collection of people active in the sf field, which includes many of the writers, editors and artists as well as 'mere' readers.

The complaints about "incest" and "insider attitudes" interested me. I really don't feel like an "insider" (but they never do, do they?). Before I took on *Matrix* a couple of years ago, I had never been to a convention and had only been in vague contact with fandom (and been a member of the BSFA) for a year; you may think this demonstrates some foolishness on the part of our Administrator, but I prefer to see it as proof that the BSFA - and fandom in general - is not exclusive, cliquey, or full of distrustful and jealous "insiders". If you want to get involved it's extremely easy, and you'll be welcomed. Part of the rôle of *Matrix* is to provide a pathway into fandom for those who want it. As for writing about each other, the only example of this I can think of is the "Who the Hell ... ?" series, which I instituted partly as a reaction to the common complaint that members of the BSFA Committee were distant, unapproachable and vague figures. Many of you seem to like this feature - BSFA information being the third most popular part of the magazine.

Gossip columns are always cliquey. That's the point! But we've tried to ensure that as much as possible of "Big Butt" should be understandable if you're fairly well-grounded in sf and have been reading the BSFA magazines. Reasonable assumptions, I hope.

One of the most encouraging results of the survey was the large number of potential *Matrix* contributors. Thank you, and over the next few months I'll be in contact.

Finally, letters. You want more letters? So do I. Believe me, so do I. Some say sf is dead - I don't believe it is, but it sometimes seems that BSFA members don't care either way ...

— Chris Terran, *Matrix* Editor

chris
terran

Q 37. On which authors would you particularly like to see interviews/features in *Vector*?

IN RESPONSE to this question, no fewer than 184 different writers were named. In total 346 votes were divided between these 184. Clearly the most popular author was **Iain (M.) Banks**, who was mentioned 12 times, with **C. J. Cherryh** following closely with 10 mentions. With 7 each came **Greg Egan**, **Ursula Le Guin**, **Dan Simmons** and **Jack Vance**. Mentioned 6 times each were **Barbara Hambly**, **Ken MacLeod**, **Ian McDonald**, **Terry Pratchett** and **Gene Wolfe**. With 5 mentions were **David Brin**, **Lois McMaster Bujold**, **Christopher Priest** and **Sheri S. Tepper**. With 4 were **John Crowley**, **Mary Gentle**, **Robert Holdstock**, **Gwyneth Jones**, **Paul J. McAuley**, **Tim Powers** and **David Zindell**.

13 further writers were each mentioned by 3 respondents, while another 31 had two mentions. All remaining authors were mentioned just once. Though technically, as 4 of the writers were cited as halves of writing partnerships and each partnership was actually mentioned just the once, these 4 writers individually might be credited with half a citation. For the record these partnerships were **Andre Norton & Kathy Tyers**, and **Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman**.

Considered by nationality, it is no surprise that most of the authors named are American, with British writers following up and just a scattering of other nationalities – from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand – and only two writing in any language but English. These were the Polish **Stanislaw Lem** and the Italian **Italo Calvino**.

While it is both difficult and arbitrary to say which authors are 'up-and-coming', which established and which Grand Masters, it is possible to say that the majority of the authors most often mentioned are currently active and in many cases at the height of their powers, producing their best work in recent years. About 15%, dependent upon definition, of the writers might be considered 'up-and-coming', around 60-65% established, with the remainder either Masters, retired or deceased. Notable by their absence were such important figures as **Wells**, **Tolkien**, **Asimov**, and coming up to date **Clive Barker**, **Michael Crichton** and **Stephen King**. Either these are considered so important and famous that it is assumed that they will cover in any case, or people really are no longer interested in them. It was also a surprise to find such writers as **Douglas Adams**, **Poul Anderson**, **Ray Bradbury**,



Arthur C. Clarke, **Philip K. Dick**, **Robert Heinlein**, **Brian Stableford** and **Ian Watson** mentioned only once each.

Defining genre is again an arbitrary matter, but I have divided the writers into SF, Fantasy, Horror, Mainstream, and Mixed for those authors whose work is predominantly sf but includes much work outside the genre (e.g. Banks and Simmons). These criteria give sf writers 60% of the nominations, with Mixed another 13%, so that a total of 73% of the total nominations are for either sf writers or predominantly sf writers who write substantial amounts of other fiction. 22% were for Fantasy authors, only 4% for Horror writers and 1% for Mainstream.

Although much horror fiction is a subset of fantasy in the general sense, the tone and intent is so different that it appears to appeal only marginally to sf/fantasy readers. While 11 different horror writers were mentioned, only one, **Clark Morris**, was mentioned more than once; he received 2 nominations. If any conclusion can be drawn from this, it must be that no individual horror writer is of particular interest to the broad membership, but that perhaps the occasional overview of current horror fiction would be appropriate.

Given the sometimes interperate arguments between the sf and fantasy lobbies it is notable how strongly sf dominates. Of those mentioned 5 or more times only **Terry Pratchett** can be thought of as a fantasy writer, and his inventive brand of comic fiction appeals far more widely than the High Fantasy ghetto. In fact, the fantasy authors most frequently cited are especially noted for their creative individuality and genuine imagination. **John Crowley**, **Robert Holdstock**, **Tim Powers** and **Storm Constantine** are all as far from the clichés of the "cruddy Celtic trilogy" as it is possible to get. It appears that when BSFA members decide to vary their mainly sf diet they choose the best and most inventive of the fantasy writers. The more conventional writers of endless formula series are almost entirely absent. Even the very commercially successful **David Eddings** was only mentioned twice.

As for the sf writers, you chose the hard-science space operas of **Iain M. Banks** and **C. J. Cherryh** as favorites, with strong showings for the epic scale, more cosmological space opera of **Gene Wolfe**, **David Brin**, **David Zindell** and **Greg Bear**. **Ursula Le Guin** is the most popular of the old guard, along with **Jack Vance** from an even earlier generation. The very hard – in several senses – fiction of **Greg Egan** is greatly appreciated, even if this is not reflected in book sales. **Christopher Priest** and **Robert Holdstock** prove to be the most popular British writers of the 1970s post-New Wave generation, while **Ken MacLeod** makes a strikingly strong showing on the strength of just two novels.

If the most popular writers have anything in common, it's that they tell good stories well, with strong characters in imaginative worlds. Many write on a grand scale and are not afraid of the Big Idea. In addition they provide either hard science or inventive, provocative fantasy. They all stimulate the imagination, and they all, on occasion, deliver that classic sense-of-wonder. That seems to me quite a healthy state of affairs.

— Gary Dalkin, *Vector* Joint Features Editor

THERE WAS some general interest in merchandise: 35 people (19.7%) did not express interest in any proposed merchandise; another 40 (22.5%) were interested only in more publications and not in other merchandise. Of the other possible items, however, T-shirts were the most popular, quite closely followed by



Suggestions for other items of merchandise which we hadn't necessarily thought of ourselves included polo shirts, ties, enamel badges or lapel pins, binders for the magazines, a map of Great Britain showing sites of sfal interest, dayglo bouncy aliens and various inflatable things! As with everything else in the BSFA, feedback is always helpful and any comments on these proposals would be very welcome.

61.8% of members said they would be interested in buying merchandise (including publications) through mail order, and 28.7% want to buy it at conventions (with an overlap of 16.8% who clearly want to buy it anywhere it's available – in which case, hurry hurry to page 19.)

The main functions of merchandise are to raise awareness of the BSFA, to raise funds with which to provide more services or to keep subscription costs down, and to provide in itself another service which members can take advantage of (BSFA T-shirts, for example, are sold at a discount to members).

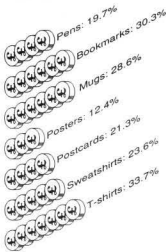
— Claire Brialley, *Publicity & Promotions*

Q44. Would you be interested in more BSFA publications?

YES (62.4%)

NO (37.6%)

Q 45. Would you be interested in the following items of BSFA merchandise?



Q 47. Do you think the BSFA should increase its use of the Internet?

YES 43.8%

NO 56.2%

Q 48. Do you have Internet access?

YES 41.0%

NO 59.0%

In 1989 Internet access was limited, by and large, to the academic community and the serious hobbyist; it wasn't even asked about in the survey. And now nearly half of you are on the net. I expected the figure to be fairly high, given the nature of the membership, but on the order of 25% rather than 40%. I wonder if we've reached saturation; that is, if all the members likely to get netted have now done so.

The close match between the answers to questions 47 and 48 prompts the obvious thought – are those who wish the BSFA to use the net limited to those with access? And the answer is equally obvious: of the 78 people who wanted more usage, 60 have net access. Of the other 13 who have access, 9 thought the BSFA should increase its use of the net and 4 ventured no opinion.

Question 49 asked about a BSFA mailing list, and 37.8% of you expressed interest in joining. Some of you may recall that we ran an experimental list in 1995, and if resources permit this may be restarted.

Tanya Brown is now in the process of setting up a BSFA web site, which should be on line later in the year.

— Chris

THE MEMBERSHIP SURVEY didn't actually contain any questions specifically aimed at finding out how interested people are in attending group meetings, whether of the BSFA London Meeting type, or a totally informal meeting, in the pub for instance.

Despite this, some of the answers and comments lead me to believe that a not insignificant number of members, for whom the BSFA mailings are their only link with other people interested in sf, would also like some personal and direct contact.

Only half of the survey respondents felt that the Association provides enough contact for sf fans, and many of the answers to the question "What might encourage you to get involved?" mention meeting other members.

From my point of view, the simplest way to meet others is to hold a meeting, but those interested in finding fellow sf buffs may prefer something else. Let me know if you would like to get together with others at whatever kind of event you prefer.

Given the size of the BSFA, the chances are that there will not be droves of members on your area. It should, however, be possible to either put you in touch with the nearest sf group (keep your eye on the events page too, which carries details of some local groups) or other people who have expressed an interest in meeting, or at least show you one or two way of finding other people.

I hope that if you want some company you will take this opportunity. I've never known anyone to regret the move from postal participation to 'turning up for things'.

— Paul Hood, London Meeting Coordinator

• You can contact Paul at T12 Meadowside, Eltham, London, SE9 6BB or phone 0181 333 6670.



WHAT THE BEST-DRESSED SF FAN IS WEARING THIS SUMMER . . .

BSFA T-shirts are available to members at a cost of £6.50 each (inclusive of P&P) in the UK (overseas members, please write for details of postage costs and arrangements for payment). We currently have three designs available by artists Don West and Dave Hicks. All of the T-shirts are printed in white on black, and are available in Large, Extra Large and Extra Extra Large sizes (the two Don West designs, 60s and Lumpy Bits, will also be available in Medium soon). If you would like to order one or more of these exclusive items, please send a cheque or postal order, payable to British Science Fiction Association, to:

BSFA Merchandise
c/o 26 Northampton Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 7HA

We will do our best to despatch merchandise within twenty-eight days of receiving your order, or will let you know if there is any problem. Whilst we aim for speed and efficiency, as with all BSFA services this is something we do voluntarily in our spare time, so please bear this in mind if there is a short delay.

And there it is . . . nearly 800 pages of data reduced to five. Once more, I'd like to thank all of you who took part, the contributors to this report, and most of all Claire Brislley, who put in an enormous amount of work. If you have any questions or comments we'd be delighted to hear from you, of course. Some questions immediately sprang to my mind when I saw the results. For instance, why the substantial increase in female members? Does sf appeal more to women than it used to, or does the BSFA appeal more? Only you can say . . .

— Chris Terran

video

where the winds of limbo roar

john ashbrook

gives over playing air guitar for a few moments to consider a film which now makes its video debut a decade and a half after leaving our cinema screens.



HEAVY METAL THE MOVIE was released in 1981. It made a brief showing in British cinemas, before vanishing without trace for fifteen years. Whatever the problem which kept it hanging in limbo for so long, prohibitive palms seem to have been generously greased and it has once again slid into view. Obviously, in its absence the film has earned itself a substantial reputation.

Produced by then-neophyte Ivan Reitman (who went on to direct *Ghostbusters* and all those *Amie* 'comedies'), the movie was an attempt to inject the success of *Fritz the Cat* (1971), based on Robert Crumb's subterranean comics, with the life that *Star Wars* (1977) had subsequently pumped into the rotting corpse of the sf genre movie.

Heavy Metal magazine had revolutionised the field of adult comics by presenting unrestrained flights of imagination in sumptuous (and at that time unprecedented) full-colour. Unfortunately, the writing was of a far lower quality than the artwork; it was a magazine to look at, not to read.

And the movie? If anything, the stories included here are even less adventurous than those in the comic. It is an anthology piece – never a successful medium, but often one which throws up interesting aberrations – such as *Dr Terror's House of Horrors* (1964) or *The Twilight Zone Movie* (1983). The linking-motif of the movie is The Loc-Nar, a glowing green ball which, for no readily apparent reason, kills everyone and everything it comes into contact with, to the very welcome accompaniment of a montage of late 70s rock music.

The first story is set in a sleazy New York of the near future. Predating *Blade Runner* as it does, this sequence serves to remind you that dystopianism isn't the sole province of cyberpunk. Taxi driver Harry Cannon provides the Philip Marlowe

Continued overleaf ➤

zines

SFX Discworld Magazine (M. J. Simpson; A4; £3.50)

Is there no end to the Pritchett itch? Not if SFX has a say. The magazine has always held its wagon to Terry's train, and this special production is edited by M. J. Simpson, with contributions from David Barrett and Langford; it can be found at Smiths and other newsgroups. It's full of SFX's punning headlines and (especially for Discworld) cod-Shakespearean captions, and has a poster, one side by Josh Kirby (the cover of *Maskerade*) and the other (Great A'Tuin) by Paul Kidby. The whole is packed with illustrations from the animated series. Stephen Briggs introduces Discworld for beginners. Simon introduces the Cosgrove Hall team – actors as well as animators. Then a 'Discworld Who's Who', 'being a most complete and full guide to the talented numbers who do voice ye cartoon and ye numerous and diverse characters they do represent. By ye noted authority M. J. Simpson (gen'l.). Potted acting histories, photos, comments, including Christopher Lee as Death, Annette Crosbie as Granny W., Graham Crowden as Ridiculy, Les Dennis as the Fool.

David Barrett interviews the composers, not just of the jolly main theme music but also the pop and rock pastiches of *Soul Music*. 'The Cosgrove Hall Project' describes the previous animated series produced by Mark Hall and Brian Cosgrove (cartoons *Dangermouse*, *Count Duckula*, *The BFG*, models *Wind in the Willows*, *Truckers*). 'My Dinner With Terry' is a transcribed interview between Pritchett and the editors over a restaurant meal. *Hogfather* is planned for a Christmas special, and a live-action version of *Mort* is on the move. The Australian Discworld book is the next one after *Jingo* (due in Nov). Terry was amused that he didn't get into the Waterstone's Books of the Century poll – because all his books nominated, and the votes were hopelessly split. 'Wheel of Discworld' illustrates the covers and capsules the plots so far. There's a roundup of spynote: graphic novels, playscripts, cassettes, maps, games and models. Stephen Briggs produces merchandise under the name of CMOT Dibbler, apparently. And of course you need the Internet references. David Langford winds up the magazine with some extra Discworld quiz questions. Turn to

the back cover and you find you are holding 'Three one and only Dysworld magazine. As authorised by Mr T. Pritchett ... Published by Dibbler Press, Ankh-Morpork ... Property of Unseen University Library ...'

It's clear some people had a lot of serious fun putting this together!

— Jessica Yates

ALSO RECEIVED (mention does not preclude a future review)

Baleful Head 1 (Murray Ewing; A5, 32pp; £1.25 inc. p&p)
Baleful Head, 43 (Green Hedges Avenue, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 1DZ)

★ Debut issue of a very promising new 'fantasy review' zine, focusing on *The Wizard of Oz*. There's also an article on music and Michael Moorcock, reviews of the *Heavy Metal*, Tad Williams's *Caliban's Hour*, and much else. Recommended.

Odyssey 8 (James Lecky; A4, 40pp; £2 or £3 for 4; cheques payable to Third Wave Publications)

Third Wave Publications, 3 Bentley Terrace, Waterside, Londonderry, N. Ireland, BT47 1BN

★ SF and fantasy stories, zine reviews, a comic strip, letters, and some variable artwork. Note this is unconnected to the forthcoming zine edited by Liz Holliday (see pp.4, 21).

Dark Eyes 1 (James Lecky; A5, 44pp; £1.75)
 (As above for details.)

★ Dark fantasy and horror stories.

Zene 11 (Andy Cox; A5, 36pp; subscription £3 for four issues)
 TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Wilcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB
 Tel: 01353 777931

★ Essential guide to the small-press scene.

Data Dump 21 (Steve Sneyd; A5, 4pp; 70p inc. P&P)
 Hiltop Press, 4 Nowell Place, Almondsbury, Huddersfield, West Yorks., HD5 8PB

★ This is an occasional gather-up of information about sf etc genre poetry – NOT an outlet for new poetry, and the coverage in this engagingly produced leaflet is pleasingly

Zinery magazines and the small-press

wide-ranging. There's news of various Beowulf-related productions (including a *Star Trek*: *Voyager* episode!), a listing of recent operatic and musical works with sf associations, news of genre poetry books and articles, and a surprising amount more. You also get Steve's essential SF Poetry: An introductory Factsheet, with all you need to start exploring the genre.

Albedo One 13 (Brandon Ryder; A4, 36pp; sample copy £3 inc. p&p, £10 for four)
 albedo one, 2 Post Road, Lusk, Co. Dublin, Ireland
 Email: b13@y101.ie
 ★ Brian Stalder interview, stories, reviews.

Xenos 43 (Stephen Coppestate; A5, 76pp; £3.45 or £15 for 6; cheques payable to XENOS)
 Xenos, 29 Prebent Street, Bedford, Beds., MK40 1QN
 Tel: 01234 349067
 Email: xenos@xenos.demon.co.uk

★ 'Traditional character and plot driven stories' with critiques thereon. Mixture of sf and fantasy, some rather good. This zine, now in its eighth year, seems to function something like an Orbiter. There's a competition with a £100 prize, but you must be a subscriber first.

The Third Alternative 12 (Andy Cox; A4, 60pp; £2.75)
 TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Wilcham, Ely, Cambs., CB6 2LB
 Tel: 01353 777931

★ Article on Ian McEwan, J. K. Potter artwork, fiction, opinion.

• My apologies for the brevity of these notes; space is extremely tight this issue. The full reviews of all the zines above will appear next issue.

— Chris Tarrant

... continued from previous page

voicover as he ducks and dives between the local heavies and the police (who charge \$1,000 a day to solve crimes).

This promising start then nose-dives into an adventure with Richard Corben's naked barbarian, Den. For decades, this coiled mass of sexual neuroses and denied inadequacies has been waving his elephantine dick around some of the silliest wish-dream hero-fantasies ever committed to paper. Here, in view of movie censorship, he takes the trouble to wrap a loin cloth around his ... loins, but any attempt to have the character taken seriously is rather undermined by having him voiced by spherical funnyman John Candy.

Two stories in and we've seen two hugely-endowed women strip down to their anti-perspirant in order to fall helplessly into the arms of two anti-heroes for the traditional Good Seeing To. It doesn't take Albert Einstein to notice a trend forming here.

This is about as far from politically correct as you can get without recourse to warp drive, featuring little more than simple male teenage fantasies writ large and made epic. OK, so this may be in keeping with the style of the magazine, but the visual beauty which could persuade you to ignore its literary shortcomings simply isn't present in the movie. Limited animation makes much of the film clumsy and foolish. Sixteen years ago it may well have been state of the art, but now we have been swamped by a tidal wave of technically quite extraordinary Japanese anime. It is even sadly wanting when compared to American movies of the period like Ralph Bakshi's *Wizards* (1977).

Nevertheless, about half way through, the promise of the Harry Canyon tale begins to be realised, reaching a high-water mark with a hilarious alien abduction story where two airhead aliens snort precocious quantities of Nyborg (only available on prescription, folks) whilst bouncering their ship all over the place.

Dan O'Bannon (who wrote *Dark Star* and *Alien*) provides the one out-and-out horror story in the film with a tale of zombies on a wartime B52, called 'Grenlins'.

The final story is both the longest and the best. On some unspecified planet, the Loc-Nar enslaves an entire city population and sends it to wage savage and bloody war against its neighbouring city. Only the Loc-Nar's age-old nemesis, a female warrior known as the Terrachain, can save the day and bring the movie to an end. The retroscope sequence (which, in case you don't have a degree in Film Studies, means a sequence which was filmed as live action then traced by artists for inclusion in the cartoon) where said woman divests herself of her civvies and squeezes into her armoured bikini (1) makes you wonder in whose personal archive the original film footage now rests.

Needless to add, after much blood-letting and the obligatory act of self-sacrifice, the Loc-Nar meets its end, just in time for the titles to roll. But that's not all: after the credits, a previously unseen sequence called 'Nowhere Land' has been included, rather as an afterthought. Better late than neverwhere ...

I suspect this piece was originally removed because, quite frankly, it makes the sequences surrounding it look a little flat. Displaying an more air of Russian or Polish experimentalism than American heroic fantasy, it tells the tale, in mine, of human evolution – starting when the Loc-Nar inspired competitive violence and therefore brought about progress. But I thought we all knew that a big black monolith did that back in 1967?

Obviously *Heavy Metal* is a feast suitable for many tastes, but ultimately, more of a worthy attempt than a resounding success. However, one aspect of the movie that I adore unreservedly is the music.

Originally released as a 'double LP' (whatever one of those might be), the soundtrack album has been reassigned as a single CD. If your secret shame is that collection of Deep Purple and AC/DC albums hidden away in the loft, then this album will be pure uncult nostalgia. Gathering great tracks from some now-forgotten names (Grand Funk Railroad, anyone?) as well as some classics from Blue Oyster Cult and Black Sabbath (respectively the Michael Moorcock-penned 'Veteran of the Psychic Wars' and 'The Mob Rules'), it is a great testament to the age before the synthesiser, when sex and drugs were still a vital part of rock and roll ... except, for 'rock and roll', read *Heavy Metal*.

— John Ashbrook

FREE VIDEOS & CDS!

We have three copies of the *Heavy Metal* video and three copies of the soundtrack CD to give away, courtesy of Columbia Tri-Star. How can you get these? Simply answer this question, either accurately or amusingly:

What is the heaviest metal of all?

Send your answers to **Metal Competition**, 9 Beechwood Court, Back Beechwood Grove, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS4 2HS
 by 15 August 1997.

— out of focus —

Out Of Focus

— Out of Focus —

... will be a regular column in *Matrix* during the mailings when *Focus* is absent. This way we hope to keep all members up-to-date with competitions, market news, workshops, and information about *Focus* itself. If you are a new member and haven't yet seen a copy of our magazine, the next one is scheduled to appear in the autumn. *Focus* is the BSFA's writers' magazine. It publishes stories, articles and poetry from members and non-members. Thinking of sending us a piece of your work? Fiction should be of good quality and up to 5,000 words; poetry to a maximum of 50 lines. We seek articles on all aspects of writing and publishing, especially those relating to sf and fantasy, up to 4,000 words. We also seek cover art, illustrations and filers.

— Letters to Focus —

Are a bit thin on the ground at the moment. Have you any responses to previous issues, or would you like to start a discussion? All letters are welcome at either of the editorial addresses.

— Competitions —

• **Xenos** is having a celebratory competition, open to subscribers only. *Xenos* is a successful, bimonthly short story magazine which features traditional character- and plot-driven stories and reader feedback on previous issues. It's now reached its eighth year of continuous publication, and the competition offers prizes of guaranteed publication, and £100 in cash. There is no entry fee and no entry limit, but you must be a subscriber. Deadline is 31 December 1997. Contact *Xenos* for further details.

Xenos, £15 for 6 issues, cheques payable to XENOS, Dept. MT, 29 Prebend Street, Bedford, MK 40 1QN

• **Wells Festival of Literature** is running short story and poetry competitions. **Short story:** prizes £150, £100, £50. Entry fee £3 each, deadline 25 August 1997. Any topic, max length 2,500 words. Contact 11 Chapman's Close, Woking, Wex, BA5 1LU. **Poetry:** prizes £120, £75, £50. Entry fee £2/poem, deadline 20 September 1997. Any topic, no more than 40 lines. Contact Haydon House, Middle Street, East Harptree, BS10 6BB.

Don't forget to enclose an SAE or International Reply Coupon when writing to editors and for competitions.

— Market News —

Odissey is a new sf magazine from Parizan Press launching this summer – see news pages for more details – and edited by former *Focus* editor Liz Holliday. Here are the writers' guidelines:

We want excellent sf and fantasy of all kinds. It's that simple. So how do we define 'excellent'? Stories that engage the reader's mind and heart and soul; stories that have a point, without confusing that point with a message better written about in an essay; stories that have characters that readers can empathise with, or love, or love to hate; stories with plots that hold together without being predictable; stories that take us to worlds – of the universes, of mythology or of the human heart – that we've never visited before. Stories that

Focus Contacts

Carol Ann Kerry Green
Flat 3, 141 Princes Avenue, Hull, HU5 3DL
Tel: 01482 494045
Email: Metaphor@enterprise.net

Julie Venner
42 Walgrave Street, Newland Avenue, Hull,
HU5 2LT

Carol Ann Kerry Green

— and —

Julie Venner

will live in the minds of our readers at least until the next issue of *Odissey* comes along.

What don't we want? Well, we generally get a lot of psychological horror, so that's always going to be a hard sell. We don't want excessive gore at all – or any gore if it's not absolutely necessary to the story. We absolutely don't want stories set in someone else's universe – *Star Trek*, *B5* or whatever. We don't want mood-pieces, or stories which sacrifice story-telling to style (or vice versa).

Word Length: Generally from 1,500 to 12,000; query for longer. Also one short-short per issue – around 750 words.

Format: Double spaced, one side white paper, one inch margins all round. Approx. word count. Name and page number on each sheet. No simultaneous or multiple submissions. Include SAE for reply, or an unstamped addressed envelope and at least 2 IRCs or an email address – we can't reply without at least one of these.

Rights and Payment: We buy first English language serial rights plus an option on reprints. We ask for permission to include a brief extract on our web pages. We expect to be paying around £400,000 (on publication), but in any event will be paying less than £201,000. Payment can be in British or US funds.

Contact: Liz Holliday, *Odissey*, 31 Shottford, Wessex Gardens, London, W2 5LG
Email: liz@gila.demon.co.uk

— Writing Workshops —

One Step Beyond is a short-story workshop for writers of sf and fantasy, running from 27 September – 4 October 1997. "Fid up with rejection slips? Spend a week in the beautiful Devonshire countryside and learn how to beat the slushpile." The course is taught by Liz Holliday (fiction editor of *Valkyrie* and editor of *Odissey* – see above) and is limited to twelve participants. There will be a talk from an editor at Virgin Publishing, who are expanding their fiction lines. Your stories will be critiqued, and there will be individual seminars on exercises. Cost is £315, including full board.

Application by submission: send a 2,000 word sample of your work and an SAE to Liz Holliday, 31 Shottford, Wessex Gardens, London, W2 5LG.

— Carol Ann Kerry Green

write out loud is a training scheme to help writers enter the airwaves. Run by the Arts Council and the BBC, it is open to published writers only. Successful applicants will attend a training course in February 1998 at the Arvon Foundation's Lumb Bank site in West Yorkshire, tutored by a writer, a radio producer and radio technicians. All tuition and accommodation is free, and there is also an award of £250 plus travelling expenses. As a follow-up, some applicants will be selected to make pilot programmes for the BBC, for which standard fees will be paid; some of these have been broadcast on Radios 3 and 4. The initial application must contain an programme idea, a CV of your writing career, and proof of publication "in a recognised publication". I suspect this won't include small-press zines, but you never know your luck. The deadline for applications is 30 September 1997.

The full brochure is essential. Contact: Clarissa Luard, Arts Council of England, 14 Great Peter St. London, SW1P 3NQ. Tel 0171 973 6440, fax 0171 973 6590. Or contact your local area Arts Board – Eastern Arts Board, South West, Northern, Yorkshire & Humberside etc. — Chris Tarran

Psst!

wanna write some sf?

The BSFA runs writers' postal workshops, known as *Orbiters*. Each group (or orbit) consists of five members, with one member chosen to be the coordinator of the group.

I've been looking after the Orbit groups for four years now, and in that time they've grown to encompass members from the UK and overseas. We now have nine groups circulating short stories and novel extracts from sf to fantasy to horror. There are also two groups specifically for circulating novels.

If you are interested in writing and would like to get constructive feedback on your creations, then an *Orbiter* is the place for you. Each member of the group places a manuscript in the parcel, writes constructive critical comments on the other manuscripts, and sends it on its way. In return they receive four criticisms on their own manuscripts. The parcels go round the groups in varying times, but the average is ten to twelve weeks. It is important that each member does not hold on to the parcel for more than two weeks (though exceptions can be made if all agree).

Be warned, though: *Orbit* groups are not ego-booster, they can be and should be hard work. If you think you've got what it takes to not only receive constructive criticism, but to give it, then the *Orbit* groups should work for you.

A quarterly newsletter is also produced, *Trajectory*, which includes market information, competition details, and letters from *Orbiter* members.

If you are interested in joining an *Orbiter*, please contact:

Carol Ann Kerry Green
Flat 3
141 Princes Avenue
Hull
HU5 3DL

— Carol Ann Kerry Green

Worlds Without Number Crossword Solution and Results

A large and very appreciative postbag welcomed John English's return to Crossword Corner. As a regular solver of cryptic crosswords myself I also appreciate the 'tough but fair' clues he uses. Thank you for all your kind comments, which I will pass on to John.

The winner – and one of several who emailed their entries – was Mike Abbott of Cambridge, and he will get his book-laden in due course.

— Roger Robinson



The perimeter title is *The Hobbit*, or *There and Back Again* by Tolkien.

events

read me first

- Please enclose an SAE when contacting conventions.
- Efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of all the information here, but always check first.
- If you run, or know of, any unlisted conventions or events please let me know at the editorial address.
- Please mention Matrix when enquiring.
- Guests at media conventions appear 'subject to work commitments'.
- Special thanks to: **Dave Langford, Chris O'Shea, Bridget Wilkinson**, errors are mine.

regulars

BSCFA London Meetings

The BSCFA's regular London meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month (except December), in the upstairs room of the Jubilee Tavern on York Road, London SE1, between Waterloo and Westminster Bridges. Nearest stations Waterloo (mainline or Underground) or Westminster (Underground). Things start at about 7.00pm; if you get there early and the upstairs room is closed we'll be in the main bar and, if in doubt, the landlord will be able to point us out to you. Meetings are open to all.

♣ **Paul Hood** on 0181 333 6670 for further information (note number change).

23 Jul 97; 27 Aug 97; 24 Sep 97; 22 Oct 97; 26 Nov 97.

London Circle Meetings

The move to the Jubilee Tavern (see above) now seems to be permanent. London Circle meetings are held on the first Thursday in each month, and usually start about 5pm. No special events but very popular and crowded.

♣ Just turn up!

7 Aug 97; 4 Sep 97; 2 Oct 97; 6 Nov 97; 4 Dec 97.

Birmingham — The Brum SF Group meets on the second Friday of the month at a pub in Birmingham; contact them for details. Membership is £15 per year, which includes a monthly newsletter.

♣ **Martin Tudor**, 24 Ravensbourne Grove, off Clarks Lane, Willemhal, West Midlands, WV13 1HX.
♣ **bsf@btinternet.com**

Cambridge — Cambridge SF Group meets on the second Monday of the month in The Wrestlers, New Market Road, Cambridge.

• Cambridge Fantasy Group meets on the second Sunday of the month in the Zebra pub on Newmarket St., Cambridge.
♣ John Oram, 3 Oatlands Ave., Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8EQ

Cardiff — **-CHANGE-** Cardiff SF Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm in Wellington's Cafe Bar, 42 The Hayes, Cardiff.

Colchester — Colchester SF / Horror / Fantasy Group meets on the third Saturday of each month at 12.30pm in The Playhouse pub on St. John's Street.

♣ **Des Lewis** on 01255 812119

Hull — The Hull SF Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, 8pm to 10.30pm at Ye Olde Blue Bell, Market Place, Hull.

♣ **Ian & Julie** on 01482 447953 or **Dave & Estelle** on 01482 444291.

Leicester — Leicester SF Group meets on the first Friday of the month, venue varies.

♣ **Tim Groom** on 0116 279 2280

♣ **rbear@globalnet.co.uk**

Manchester — FOMT meets in Wetherspoons's pub (on the corner of Piccadilly Gardens, near the BFI station) on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, 8pm onwards.

♣ **Mike Don** on 0161 226 2980

Peterborough — The Peterborough SF Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Bluebell Inn, Dogsthorpe, and on the third Wednesday of the month in the bar of the Great Northern Hotel, opposite the BR station.

♣ SAE to 58 Pennington, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough, PE2 5RB

6 Aug 97 (guest Jon Courtney Grimwood); 3 Sep 97.

Portsmouth — The South Hants SF Group meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at The Magpie, Fratton Road, Portsmouth.

18-20 Jul 1997: Convocation

The 16th Union combined with the British role-playing game convention. Venue is New Hall in Cambridge and the guests are **Stephen Brust, Andrew Ristone, James Wallis**. Reg. £20.

♣ Convocation, 19 Uphall Road, Cambridge, CB1 3HX

25-27 Jul 1997: Voyage 97

The second Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea convention, held at the Novotel, Arundel Gate, Sheffield. Reg. £35 all, one-day £17.50.

♣ Voyage 97, 15 Fellers Court, Exeter, Devon, EX2 4DZ

25-27 Jul 1997: Ratze-Con

YMCA Community Centre, Ratzeburg, Germany. Guests include **Brian Stabileford**. Reg. £14. Acc. £40 for two nights full board in 4-bed rooms. Tents / campsites available.

♣ Eokhard D. Marwitz, Postfach 1524, D-22905 Ahrensburg, Germany
♣ +49 4531 861 06
♣ EDMarwitz@compuserve.com

♣ <http://jourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/EDMarwitz>

26-27 Jul 1997: Oakleaf Circle Camp

'The Pagan Event of the Year' at Bridlington; live music, talks, workshops, magic, ghosts, Morris dancing, Mummies, musical instrument making, and a Wicker Man. Open air, so you'll need a tent. Reg. £12.50 adults, £2.50 under 14s.

♣ Oakleaf Circle, PO Box 513, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 6UZ
♣ 01772 499009

9-10 Aug 1997: Claretcraft Open Day

Claretcraft make rather splendid Discworld figurines, and here's to chance to buy some and get **Terry Pratchett** to sign them. Plus barbecue, beer, jollity.

♣ Claretcraft, Woolpit Bus Park, Bury St Edmunds, IP30 9UP

15-17 Aug 1997: Quartercon

Bergen, Norway. Guests **Katherine Kerr, Ingar Knudsen**. Reg. NOK 250.

♣ Quartercon, c/o Bjørn Tote Sund, Labergsvien 100 A, 5032 Minde, Norway
♣ bjorn@stilleiib.no

♣ <http://www.iib.no/~bjorn@quartercon/>

3-5 Sep 1997: LoneStarCon

The 55th World of convention in San Antonio, Texas. Guests include **Ally Budrys, Michael Moorcock**.

♣ PO Box 27277, Austin, TX 78755-2277, USA

♣ lsc2@io.com

♣ <http://www.io.com/~lsc/>

UK agent: **Mike Moir**, 27 Hampton Road, Worcester Park, Surrey, KT4 8EU

5-7 Sep 1997: Festival of Fantastic Films

Three days of spilling skilly flicks at Sacha's Hotel in Manchester. Reg. £55.

♣ 5 South Mesnesfield Road, Salford, Manchester, M7 3QP

7-12 Sep 1997: British Association Festival of Science

A week of science-related lectures, talks, discussions and exhibitions at Leeds University. Reg. (week/day) -non-BA members £120/£30; students and local residents (LS, WF, BD postcodes) £30/£10. BA members £10/£5.

♣ Major Events, British Association, 23 Savile Row, London, W1X 2NB

♣ 0171 97307350

♣ ba.major.mgr@ncrl.poptel.org.uk

♣ www.britisassoc.org.uk

26-28 Sep 1997: Masque 5

Costuming con at the Sheringham Youth Hotel, Sheringham, Norfolk. Reg. £25 to 31 Jul, thence £30. Hostel accommodation £25 pppn full board.

♣ 35 Iwerley Road, Halesowen, West Midlands, B63 3EP

♣ Masque5@compuserve.com

27-28 Sep 1997: Hypothetical '97

'Scotland's Other National Convention', Central Hotel, Glasgow. Guests **Anne Gay, Brian Waugh**. Reg. £15 all, £5 sup. (to 1 Jun).

♣ Hypothetical '97, Flat 3L, 38 Scotstoun Street, Glasgow, G14 0UN

♣ <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/hypothetical/>

23 Oct-2 Nov 1997: Coachcon

Coach trip starting in London, via Portlino, to Euro-Occocon in Ireland, and back to London for the World Fantasy Convention.

♣ SAE or zIRC's to 64 Richborne Terrace, London, SW8 1AX

25-27 Oct 1997: Euro-Occocon '97

The 1997 Eurocon and Ireland's national sf con combined, at Dublin Castle. Guests **Roderic Jordan** and **Chris Reed** of BBR (reflecting a small press stream in the programming). Reg. £25 until 29 Jul, £30 thereafter. Accommodation must be booked well in advance.

♣ Euro-Occocon '97, PO Box 5130, Dublin 4, Ireland

♣ karen@eicon.com

♣ <http://arrogant.ltc.icli.ie/Octocon.html>

29 Oct 1997: Unofficial pre-WFC Gathering

The Jubilee pub, Waterloo (see BSFA details in 'Regulars').

30 Oct-2 Nov 1997: World Fantasy Convention

Theme is Dracula, 100 years old. Venue is the Britannia International Hotel in London's Docklands. The vast guest list includes **Iain Sinclair, Joan Aiken, Bob Eggleton** with **Rob Holdstock** as MC. Reg. £100 all, £30 sup. (to 1 Jun).

♣ PO Box 31, Whitby, North Yorks., YO22 4YL

14-16 Nov 1997: Novascon 27

The 1997 Novascon moves out of Birmingham to the de Vere Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern. Guest is **Peter F. Hamilton** and registration is £30 until 30 Sep.

♣ 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS

14-16 Nov 1997: Cozy Con 2

Relaxacon at the Atlanta Hotel, The Hague. Reg. £18 all, £9 sup. Hotel £20 pppn shared.

♣ Annemarie van Ewyck, Oorchestraat 4, 2517 VT Den Haag, Netherlands

♣ vantent@few.eur.nl

21-23 Nov 1997: ArmadaCon IX

Astor Hotel in Plymouth. Guests **Colin Greenland, David Hardy**. Registration £25. £20 unwaged.

♣ 4 Glenaege Avenue, Marnmhead, Plymouth, Devon, PL3 5HL
♣ 01752 267873 or 01752 673295

13-14 Dec 1997: Babylon 5 Academic Conference

Presented in association with the SF Foundation at University College of Ripon & York St John in York. Cost inclusive of accommodation is £75, or non-residential with meals £48. Both include the conference dinner.

♣ Farah Mendelsohn, Faculty of Humanities, University College of Ripon & York St John, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO3 7EX

♣ fm7@york.ac.uk

6-8 Feb 1998: Decadence

The tenth British Fik (sf music) convention at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Gatwick. Reg. £24 all, £10 sup.

♣ Top Flat, 11 Eversham Road, Cheltenham, GL52 2AA
♣ decadence@znet2.demon.co.uk

♣ <http://www.znet2.demon.co.uk/>

13-16 Mar 1998: Corflu

Ian Sorensen brings Corflu - the 'fanzine fans' convention - to the UK for the first time. Location is the Griffin Hotel in Leeds. Reg. £25 all, £5 sup., rooms £25 pppn double/twin, £40 pppn single.

♣ Ian Sorensen, 7 Woodside Walk, Hamilton, ML3 7HY

♣ iansorensen.demon.co.uk

27-29 Mar 1998: Deliverance

Blake's Seven con at the Royal Mote House, Nottingham. Reg. £45 all, rising 1 June.

♣ Deliverance, 18 Bury Ave, Newport Pagnell, Bucks, MK16 0ED

10-14 April 1998: Intuition

The 1998 Eastern at the Piccadilly Jarvis Hotel in Manchester. Guests **Conan Willis, Ian McDonald** and **Martin Tudor**. Reg. £30 all, £15 sup.

♣ Intuition, 1 Waverley Way, Carshalton Beches, Surrey, SM5 3LO
♣ INTUITION@msf.demon.co.uk

♣ <http://www.ast.cam.ac.uk/~acb/intuition/intu>

22-25 May 1998: Lazlar Lyricon II

Hitch Hiker's Guide on run by the Z29 fan club celebrating the 20th anniversary of the series; venue Scotch Corner Hotel, Darlington. Reg. £30, guests Kevin Davis, Dirk Maggs.
 67 South Park Gardens, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, HP4 1HZ

3-5 Jul 1998: Intercontact '98

University of Oslo, Norway. Guests Gwyneth Jones, Pat Cadigan, Johannes Berg. Reg. £15 alt., £5 sup.
 Intercontact '98, PO Box 121 Blindern, 0313 Oslo, Norway
 *elf@origo.no

10-12 Jul 1998: Infinity

Angel Hotel, Cardiff. Guests include Colin Baker, Ed Bishop, Dave Prowse, Jack Chone, Lionel Fanthorpe, Andy Sawyer. Reg. £40.
 Infinity, Swin y Nant, 12 Stuart Street, Treherbert, CF42 5PR

*infinityscificon@hotmail.com

*http://www.cf.ac.uk/ccin/main/ents/sff/c/infinity.html

5-9 Aug 1998: Bucconeer

The 56th Worldcon at Baltimore, Maryland. Guests C. J. Cherryh, Milton A. Rothman, Stanley Schmidt, Michael Whelan. Reg. £80 alt. (plus various complications if you voted or pre-supported).
 UK Agent:

*John Dallman, c/o EDS Unigraphics, Parker's House, 46 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1DB
 01223 570179

*jdg@cx.compulink.co.uk

General info:

*baltimore98@access.digex.net

*http://www.access.digex.net/~balt98

21-24 Aug 1998: The Wrap Party

Celebrate the conclusion of Babylon 5 at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Heathrow, London. Confirmed guests are J. Michael Straczynski, Harlan Ellison, Jack Cohen, John Ridgeway, Bryan Talbot, Adam 'Moj' Lebowitz, John Matthews. Reg. £65 (instant cheque available), under 17s half price, under 12s free. Room rates: £40/ppn triple, £42/ppn double or twin, £47/ppn single.

*The Wrap Party, PO Box 505, Reading, RG1 7OZ

*TheWrapParty@bipin.co.uk

*http://www.bipin.co.uk/TheWrapParty

11-13 Sep 1998: Fantasycon 22

Venue: Albany Hotel, Birmingham, guest Freda Warrington plus more TBA.
 *BFS, 2 Harwood Street, Stockport, SK4 1JJ

18-21 Sep 1998: Discworld Convention II

The second convention devoted to all things Pratchett takes place at the Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool, with guests including one-guess, Stephen Briggs and Dave Langford.
 *PO Box 3086, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8TY

25-28 Sep 1998: Albacon '98

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £25 alt., £15 sup. Guests tba.
 *Albacon '98, F1/2, 10 Atlas Road, Glasgow, G21 4TE

2-5 Apr 1999: Reconvene

The last Eastercon of the twentieth century at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Guests Jeff Noon, Peter S. Beagle, John Clute. Reg. £25 alt., £12.50 sup., discounts for unwaged.

*3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ

2-6 Sep 1999: Aussiecon 3

The Worldcon goes down to Melbourne. Guests Greg Benford, Bruce Gillespie, George Turner, who died in June, will not be replaced. Reg. £90 (with complicated variations - ask 'em).
 *UK Agent: Martin Hoare, 45 Tielhurst Road, Reading, RG1 7TT

*martinhoare@cix.co.uk

27 Dec 1999-2 Jan 2000: Millennium

See in the new millennium (a year early if you're a pedant) at this con, to be held somewhere in northern Europe, probably the UK or a BeNeLux country. £4.00 per year, to be deducted from the eventual membership cost.

*Millennium, c/o Malcolm Reid, 186 Casewick Rd., West Norwood, London, SE26 6SZ

29 Dec 2000-1 Jan 2001: Hogmanaycon

Central Hotel, Glasgow. Reg. £20.01 alt., £20.01 sup. (har har).
 *26 Avonbank Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 2PA

Year of the Wombat

reviewed by Mark Plummer

Bestwood Lodge Hotel, 23-26 May 1997

The hotel had put up a sign announcing they were holding a barbecue on Sunday night for their guests at the "Science Fiction weekend". As the convention wore on, I suspect the staff were having increasing difficulty in drawing a link between sci-fi, be it Star Trek or Isaac Asimov, and a bunch of (for the most part) grown men and women firing eggs at one another with catapults. Oh well, the staff seemed to enjoy it anyway.

The Year of the Wombat (if it had been tails it would have been 'badger') was held in the Bestwood Lodge Hotel, a magnificent building in the middle of a country park just outside Nottingham. Although run along the lines of an sf convention, with its organisers and membership drawn largely from sf fandom, the simple fact is that it had pretty much bugged all to do with sf in any shape or form. Not that this was a handicap or anything.

The programme put the emphasis on fun and made full use of the facilities the venue had to offer, including the park itself, but this light-hearted approach disguised the fact that there was some fairly tight organisation behind everything, even if it was operating at a low level of visibility. And just about everything worked: from the siege-engine building competition to its a Knockout, from the Radio 4 quizshow to the Australian evening. With membership restricted to 120, in part because it was felt to be the right number for the event but also due to limited space in the hotel, the con still managed to run a twin-track programme so as well as the larger main-hall items there was a good smattering of smaller round-table events, workshops and games. And only some of them involved the participants being covered in cream, egg or water....

Obviously any convention is more than just its programming and the hotel bar, complete with minstrel's gallery (no, nobody fell off), was a convivial central area with, of course, the great outdoors for those who wanted to take advantage of the warm weather. However, it is perhaps noteworthy that there were occasions when the programme items managed to empty the bar completely.

I wouldn't claim that the Wombat formula is completely original - it drew fairly heavily on the Incons, for instance - and I certainly wouldn't advocate that all conventions adopt its approach. However, there's clearly a place for something like this in the sf convention calendar alongside the more heavyweight alternatives. The organisers have no plans to run another, which is probably a good thing as it would almost certainly be less successful, but maybe they'll do something different which might be even better....

— © Mark Plummer 1997

smalls

Members' Noticeboard

Advertisements and announcements are FREE to BSFA members. Send your ad to the editorial address.

WANTED

WANTED A) SF & F Books. By Popular Science Books. C) Books containing "Computer Applications in Natural Sciences and Engineering" including some older ones as far back as the 70s. Send SAE for wants lists, please say what. Send your own list with offers on time.

Contact: Manfred Diehl, 62 Kaiser-Wilhelm-Str. D-67055 Ludwigshafen, Germany.

BOOKS WANTED Copies in good condition of: Robert Leiringer Book No. Christopher Priest Book No. on the Edge of Forever, Elizabeth Troop ed Seven Deadly Sins, Robert van Gulik The For Magic Masters (of Poets and Murder), Kate Williams And the Angels Sing, Carlos Varro Abasco. Please contact Andy Mills on 0113 259 7153 (home)

or at andy.mills@leeds.gov.uk (work).

BOOKS NEEDED FOR A LOVING HOME: The Player of Games by Ian M. Banks. Orb paperback with Jim Burns cover please! John Crowley, Egit Gardner Docote ed. The Year's Best SF, Eighth Annual Science Fiction in the US edition also known as Best New SF Five in Britain, other edition will do. Kim Stanley Robinson The Gold Coast and The Wild Shore. Paul Park Sugar Rain. And C. J. Cherryh's Cains and the Venture and Cains' Homecoming in the Methuen paperback editions of the latter. To join the ones I've got. These are all for reading, despite my stipulations, so cheapness is appreciated (condition is not a condition). Contact: Syd Foster on 01792 206729. Thanks gang!

WANTED: a copy in any condition of The Rabble

by Bruce Eric Frank Russell. Contact: John Ollis, 51

Belmont Road, Lough L11.
WINNER CLASSIC Wanted - not for me, for a friend, honest guy. Market rate is around a quid, will pay up to £2 dependent on condition or will swap for duplicates. Titles wanted: Asa's Fables, Gulliver's Travels, Marlowe, Just So Stories, Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Macbeth, Moll Flanders, Pride and Prejudice, The Secret of Daisy Miller, Prince and the Pauper, Wind in the Willows, Wuthering Heights.
 Andy Butler, Flat 3, 28 Louis Street, Hill HJ3 1LY, Tel: 01482 251618

BOOKS REQUIRED - A couple Doubles, Banks, Corey, Delany, Niven, Saberhagen, Stalder, Starting, New Wings series, and many more. Send SAE for wants list to Ian Forsham, 12 Winston Way, Forest, Cambs, PE7 3BU. Tel: 01733 241636

FOR SALE

STOCK CLEARANCE. I have hundreds of paperback and hardback books, some 2,000 magazines ranging from pulp Astounding to digest New Worlds and Science Fantasy, thousands of comics (some even pre-war) and over 100 cinema prints. Free list on request. I'm also in the hunt for pre-1945 comics, especially Golden and Silver Age American titles and 1950s British prints of US titles such as Captain Marvel Adventures, as well as books by Fredric Brown and John D. MacDonald and many pulp such as Weird Tales, Oriental Stories and non-sf titles like Black Mask, My Fang, Doc Savage, G-8 and The Shadow. I'll pay cash or take a generous exchange with my list. Contact:

Ron Bennett, 38 Harlow Park Crescent, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG2 0AW

PRODUCE A MAGAZINE LIKE YOU'RE HOLDING. For sale: Acorn A5000 computer, 4 meg RAM, 40 meg hard drive, 14 inch colour monitor, Cannon / Computer Concepts LPB4 Lite Laser Printer. Plus all the top DTP software - InDesign II, 1st Word Plus, Acorn DTP, all manuals, discs etc. Immediate. Arrival of new baby PC into the family forces reluctant sale. £500 ONO. Cost £3,000 net. Contact: Howard Watts on Brighton 01273 699955. Buyer only.

20-23 FANTASY & SF MAGAZINES FOR SALE: F&SF, Galaxy, If, Worlds of Tomorrow, Science Fantasy, Fantasy, New Worlds, Amazing, Futura, SF Adventures, SF Horizons, Fantasy, Fantasy, ASFA, Mainly from the 60s with some 70s and a few late 50s. For list contact Tom A. Jones, 92 Manor Road, Newchapel, Bristol, BS18 1RF, or email TAJONES@EE.co

COLLECTION CLEARANCE. I have lists for Paperbacks, Hardcovers, Aerospace, and Magazines including sets and new and ASIF / Analog for 1934 to 1995. Send SAE for lists, please say which. Contact Terry Reeves, 56 Red Star Road, Scarborough, N. Yorks, YO12 5RQ

DANCER FOR THE WORLD'S DEATH. An illustrated signed and numbered limited-edition booklet by Storm Constantine with cover art by Dave Meisinger. Due October from Inception at £3.50 inc. p&g. Cheques payable to 'Inception'. Also available by Constantine from Inception: An Elemental Tale (a fantasy) and Colours (a poem). We also have stocks of new out-of-print books: Agha, Moorish Regiment, Sign of the Snake, Burning the Shadow, plus a new copy of the original 'Wraiths' book. Please send SAE for details / booklist. Contact Inception, Shree Jeffrey A. Velli Lee, London, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 2ZA

HARMS WAY by Colin Greenwood - "What if Charles Dickens had written a space opera?" - Large

paperback, the one with the pretty cover, £3.50. Also the two limited fantasy paperbacks, The Hour of the Thin Or and Other Voices (great covers by Roger Dean and Ian Miller), £1.50 each. Prices include postage. Contact: Greenleaf, 98 Sturton Street, Cambridge, CB1 2QA

THE WAY TO WRITE SCIENCE FICTION by Brian Stableford. Signed, p&g copies available at £5. Also available: The Empire of Fear, C10 hardcover, £5 C-format pdf, Serial Chemistry: Sardonian Tales of the Galactic Revolution 8c, The Age of Targers, L10 bound set (limited to 500 copies of 3 pbs. All prices post free. Order from Brian Stableford, 113 St Peter's Road, Reading RG6 1PG

CRUCIFORM VARIATIONS: a collection of 12 scientific/cultural cryptic crosswords (including annotated solutions) by John Gifford. New available! Price £2.00 from Beccon Publications, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex, RM3 0RG.

SF BOOKS / MAGAZINES FOR SALE. The Science Fiction Foundation Collection has a large number of science fiction / fantasy books and magazines for sale at bargain prices. Proceeds to the SFF. Contact: Andy Sawyer on 0151 794 2696 / 2733 or email asawyer@liverpool.ac.uk for further details.

MISC

NET NEWBIE I was convinced at intervention that I kept not on-line, that it was the only way to keep in touch. The only thing is, I don't know anyone else on-line. Can I have a computer pal? My address is yronne@balfoursoft.net.co.uk

HELP! FILL THIS COLUMN! Been looking for a book for years but can't find it? Got a fantasy you want to distribute or solicit articles for? Books, tapes, videos for sale? Want to make contacts? Publicise your local group? Find penfriends? Use this FREE service and reach every BSFA member! Send your ad to the editorial address.



Skull Crackers

Roger Robinson's

RESULTS OF COMPETITION 125: "ALPHABETI SPAGHETTI"

The winner is ME, as there were no entries at all (boo hoo). However, you are not getting out of it that easily as I will carry on repeating it, with some extra clues, until someone cracks it.

COMPETITION 125: "ALPHABETI SPAGHETTI SLIGHTLY UNRAVELLED"

While playing with my alphabet soup one day I noticed that I could spell out the first and last names of several authors, and that the lengths of their names gradually increased. Also to my amazement there were three Hugo winners, three women, three born before World War I, three British residents, and three whose surnames started and ended with the same letter. (Yes, I know that makes fifteen clues, but there are only ten authors.)

Can you find the authors if I tell you that the 115 letters in the rather large bowl of soup were:

8 A, 3 B, 5 C, 3 D, 13 E, 4 F, 1 G, 5 H, 1 I, 2 J, 2 K, 6 L, 3 M, 13 N, 12 O, 14 R, 4 S, 6 T, 2 U, 1 V, and 3 Y.

Clues: humorous writer (3A) – Clarke Award winner (4A) – Scottish writer (4S) – Hugo-winning novelist (5S) – very prolific American author (5B) – Hugo-winning novelist (6B) – writer associated with the eighth month (6T) – Hugo-winning novelist (7T) – 1997 Worldcon GohF (7R) – anagram of remaining letters (8R).

PREVIEW OF COMPETITION 130: "LASTS"

As those of you with long memories may remember, I started setting these competitions in issue 81 with a competition all about "SF Firsts". The reason I offered to edit the competition section was that in the past I had enjoyed entering them myself. I now wish to return to being a competitor rather than an editor, and I have decided that competition 130 (the 50th anniversary of my first) will be my last, and will be on the subject of "SF Lasts".

Now I said I wanted to be an entrant – but this means there must be competitions (as well as crosswords) to enter. And this in turn means there must be a competitions editor to run them. So, PLEASE, apply in droves either to me or to Chris Terran.

Matrix Crossword 19

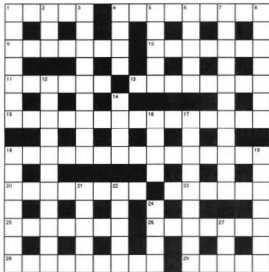
by John English

Across

- Broom thus eaten by alien. (5)
- Alien has shock therapy in low joint. Holmes? (9)
- Diary of Albert, madman with one loose. (7)
- Less angular, having gold back below... (7)
- ... when witches meet to bury pop group in stone? (6)
- Identification for criminals needing to meet at back of public house? (8)
18. 12's book by 4D with second dated Dorsai relic from mad Uriah. (2,8,5,2,8,5)
- Travellers taking celebratory drinks; one is replaced by Geller. (8)
- Writing group up against your lack of interest. (6)
- Ring-bearing girl goes to old city clutching note. (7)
- Exercise lungs at hospital in land of hobbits. (7)
- Return toss to regressive type. (9)
- Mechanical worker found dead in rubbish. (5)

Down

- Cooked until black, then lifted. (7)
- Missile used by Frodo's companion? (3)
- Move by force using weapon with lever. (9)
- Author in Denmark eating 99? (4)
- One of Fantastic Four, monster captured by The Hulk initially. (5)
- Noble like Gibson's Zero? (5)
- Unconcerned at home, not the same. (11)
- Mistake by Slippery Jim, taken in by Eastern drink. (7)
- Film deal renegotiated, snapped up by author. (5,6)



- Author is loth to get drunk? (4)
- Doctor, one Periwinkle initially, pathetic person. (4)
- Vanish into hell with forbidden fruit, not left with a right. (9)
- One from Heaven Belt isn't in with players. (7)
- Quiet may disturb tree creature; provide reimbursement. (7)
- Relative by marriage, legally. (5)
- Planet of origin of Matrix editor. (5)
- Word of 4D, "Bismuth in Britain". (4)
- Author of E.C. losing last vessel. (3)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION
See page 21

Please send all competition and crossword entries, together with any related correspondence, to:

Roger Robinson
75 Rosslyn Avenue
Harold Wood, Essex
RM3 0RG

Or email:
becon@dia1.pipex.com

by

Friday 15 August 1997

Big Butt Aleph

rolls up the news

- **SPACE** Cloddy William Hill has cut the odds on intelligent life being found in space from 1,000:1 to 33:1. What do they know that we don't?
- **ADSPK** Staff here have always thought that advertising copywriters are overpaid, overused, and over in Cannes at the film festival one of the innumerable posters was for a horror flick called *Habitat*. It showed an image of an old spooky house with an ad line that was simple, punchy and, as it turned out, eerily accurate: "Don't Go In!"
- **BY THE WAY** Which One's Dorothy? Aleph's been mad for looking years, so he's quite prepared to believe in such things as Whitley Streiber and the curious parallels alleged to exist between Pink Floyd's album *The Dark Side of the Moon* and the movie *The Wizard of Oz*. Put on the video, and start the CD just as the MGM lion roars. Watch and listen. Many odd coincidences occur, too many to list here, but there's a particularly striking one at the end of the record, which – as everyone knows – closes with a heartbeat. And what's happening on screen? Dorothy's ear is tucked up against the Tin Man's chest.
- **GREENE MANSIONS** Graham Greene obviously went to a 1930s Easterner, describing the Adelphi Hotel as:

designed without aesthetic taste but with the right ideas about comfort and a genuine idea of magnificence. It could probably house as many passengers as an Atlantic liner; passengers, because no one goes to Liverpool for pleasure... [T]here was a character hidden in this hotel; it wasn't chic, it wasn't bright, it wasn't international; there remained something hidden, among its long muffled corridors, beneath the huge cliff-like fall of its walls, the idea of an English inn.

... or maybe it was just plain "sod f'ner" – *The Guardian* Banks looking for sex, death and pits of Old Peculier.

• **PLANE TO YEW?** Our mite of Victor – The Bumper SF Comic For Boys passed on a draft of an editorial in which the writer had managed to render a late lamented astronomer as Carl Saigon. Iain Banks was described as a "popular" writer, but fortunately someone thought to alter it and things afterwards were fine, okay? A spokesperson retorted, "Fir cough," if we heard right, and pointed out he'd also mistyped Robot Holdstock. Castration's too good for 'em.

• **FIVE YEARS AGO** ace letterback Philip Muldewyn wrote to Victor 156: "A brief statement of opinion is not a review... for one would like longer reviews". Twenty-five issues later: the idea of... short, condensed reviews was a good one... wordier length seems to have encouraged self-indulgence. No pleasing some people.

• **TALKING MANAGEMENT** Aleph has recently had to read some management manuals for upgrading, and someone suggested that talking management books are the real McCoy, and could be listened to while commuting. *Secrets of Effective Communication: How to Get Any Idea Across in 30 Seconds* seemed a useful title, until he noted that it comes on two ninety-minute cassettes.

• **AREN'T YOU GLAD HE ISN'T PRIME MINISTER?** Here's the start of the web page allegedly set up on AOL (where else?) by one William Hague (<http://members.aol.com/willhague/index.html>), leader of something called the "Conservative Party", an organisation with fewer and older members than the BSFA:

Hello Fellow-Surfs,

I am new to this Internet thing, and this page is all my own creation. I hope you will excuse the basic layout, but I am still learning HTML!

There's nothing quite like that exquisite mixture of embarrassment and humiliation you feel when someone makes a complete fool of themselves in public, is there? Although it was soon exposed as a spoof, it had an awful plausibility....

○ — N₅ <? <X.

BIG BUTTERS: John Ashbrook, Andy Butler, A. Mole, Chris Terran, • Aleph welcomes scandal, rumour, gossip, cuttings, drawings, small pieces of cheese, and bribes (no editorial address).



the hot and excited matrix is double-booked on an acon a5000, searched for contraband by various bits of software (notably zap, a purple donkey among text editors), holiday-snapped by an hp laserjet 5l, given a nice all-over tan by pdc copyprint, whizzed through customs by bramley mailing services, lost at the airport by the royal mail, and wished-you-were-here by orbital

—matrix 126— soundtrack by dodgy (or was it the who?), oriole part, ryo hattersley, (... the stones?) catanion, donald lagen, (the kings?) farport conversation, i s back (—goldberg variations—), apu, mouth music, and the reassuring sound of an england collapse — "but in bright morning converse again"